

Commonweal

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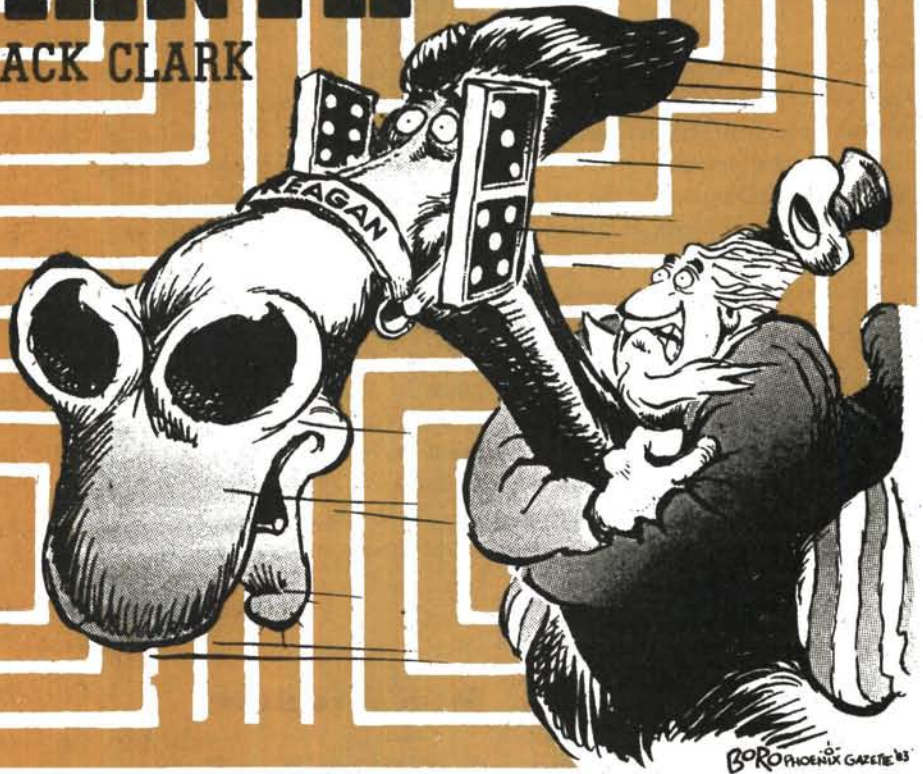
The Editors
TRUTH ON TAXES
Jeremiah Baruch
NO EASY FREEZE

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JUNE 3, 1983

The El Salvador LABYRINTH

JIM CHAPIN & JACK CLARK



Why the pastoral is shocking

GERALD P. FOGARTY

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Correspondence

Ambition & Powers

Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y.

To the Editors: Your Mr. Powers asks why superpowers are expansionist — such as the Soviets meddling in Angola [Feb. 11]. A member of the Politburo might ask why Mr. Powers troubles to scribble for a pittance. The answer to both questions is the same: the desire to make a mark on this world — ambition. But only among the decaying favored classes of northwest Europe and its settlements could such a question be asked.

B. BRUCE-BRIGGS

Powers & military

Shaftsbury, Vt.

To the Editors: As an expert in quitting jobs and careers let me suggest that Tom Powers take a leave of absence for a year and then make his decision.

Three months in Nagasaki at the end of World War II caused me to resign a Marine Corps commission. The post-bomb life of the people of Nagasaki has never left me. A great deal of time in conversation with Bishop Paul Yamaguchi of Nagasaki softened the blow of those months but not sufficiently to cause me to remain a day longer than possible in the military.

Tom is one voice as is *Commonweal* against the power of the military and it is the same in the U.S.A., the USSR and wherever it arises as it did in Japan, Germany, Italy, etc., before World War II. Israel is a likely next candidate.

Tom should spend the next several months visiting the world's trouble spots, make notes and see what happens when he returns . . .

WALTER G. HOOKE

Military & priests

Milwaukee, Wisc.

To the Editors: I have been a regular reader of *Commonweal* for approximately nine years. Naturally, some issues have been more informative and

morally stimulating than others.

I believe your magazine has stepped backwards *morally* in courting priests for the Air Force (cf. the half-page ad in the Mar. 25 issue). I can't imagine what or whom you are trying to reach or what kind of a moral stance you are taking.

I admit that there are people in the Air Force. But blessing their efforts with a priest's presence is either a contradiction in terms or a continuation of that part of history which saw church figures making the sign of cross over the troops as they marched away to war. . . .

TERRY A. HESS

Priests & killing

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: I was greatly upset at finding an advertisement for Air Corps chaplains in your magazine [Mar. 25]. Its presence, at least for me, negates all the work you and your writers have done for peace, and peace education. This advertisement promotes the training of our clergy, as well as our youth, in the art of killing, the art of dismantling God's creation. The advertisement also suggests that you have peace on your lips and not in your hearts and something else in your pockets.

I beg of you to please rely on God's grace for your needs and put away any connections with these kinds of advertisements of those who are willing to kill the innocent in the name of justice. We must be willing to wage peace with the intensity with which we have waged war.

ANDREW COMAS

CorJesu Community

Steel & realities

Pittsburgh, Pa.

To the Editors: Perception may be as important as reality when viewing national agreements with traditional manufacturing sectors. David Bensman [Mar. 25] takes issue with the recent contract between the United Steelworkers of America and the major steel producers by providing a forum for those who are unhappy with it, ignoring the reality that capacity utilization in the industry was down to almost one-third of its potential

at one point last year.

Reporting that one local president's view was "widely shared" begs the question: apparently 63 of the 232 presidents who voted on the contract *may* have shared his displeasure, but a much larger number (169) approved it. And that is how a union functions, whatever Mr. Bensman's pleasure.

There are many realities which make those who work in steel in this country unhappy. Indeed, there are many "ravaged steel towns whose future hung in the balance." That is reality. But it is a rhetorical disservice and a malignment of individual convictions to suggest that the majority of steel local presidents who voted for the contract shared anything but the same concerns as those who voted against it.

Additionally, it is insulting to suggest that there is "fine print" in an agreement whose language was read line for line at a ratification conference, discussed and debated, then followed by a reconvening for more debate and a vote the following day. That may be more of a commentary on Bensman's sources than on the process itself.

One wonders if he applauds those union members who would not let their elected officials speak at a membership meeting? It may have the same substance as his reporting about local officials "waiting anxiously for information about the progress of the talks." Those who were there were involved in the bargaining process and were briefed by gen-

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commonweal



INCOME TAX BLUES

WITH APRIL 15 more than six weeks behind us and its memory fading away, perhaps this is as good a time as any for a few notes about taxes. Benjamin Franklin said, "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." And as Edmund Burke put it, "To tax and to please, no more than to love and to be wise, is not given to men." Franklin and Burke were both right. Taxes are inevitable, if there is to be any kind of organized community at all; at the same time almost everybody in all places and in all times considers them to be too high. Granting that, though, how do our taxes compare with those in other industrialized nations, and how do the benefits from recent tax-cutting stack up?

A general conclusion, documented in any number of sources: painful as most of us find our taxes, taxpayers in the United States do not pay an inordinate share of their income in taxes, as compared with citizens in most other countries. The Tax Foundation did a study on the subject using the figures for 1978, before the Reagan tax cuts. The conclusion: the U.S. was ranked seventeenth among twenty-three comparable nations, with our taxes equal to 30.2 percent of the gross national product. Among the nations studied, Sweden hit a high of 53.5 percent of the national GNP, while Turkey was low with 22.5 percent. Japan with 24.1 percent was the only major industrialized nation with a lower tax burden than the U.S., at least in part because of minimal defense expenditures and the fact that its elderly constitute a much smaller proportion of the population, thus requiring less expenditure on social services. Percentages in West Germany and France were in the upper 30s, and the figure for Great Britain was 34.5 percent. maybe all this will make the wounds you suffered on April 15 smart a little less.

There still remains, of course, a fundamental question: how much tax is too much? Nobody but its creator takes the Laffer curve very seriously these days, but everybody will agree that taxes should not be so high as to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs; what there is no agreement on is when we reach that point. A good many people we run into feel that our present level of taxation might not be too much if only taxes were spent primarily to help the poor and for other socially useful projects; as it is, however, with such a high percentage of U.S. taxes going for armaments, they think taxes are too high; for better or worse, as everyone knows, the amount the government is taking in taxes does not match outlay, and the current and projected Reagan deficits are ominous.

What people usually look at, though, is whether taxes are too high as compared with past years. On this point you have to look at what people have left after the tax collector takes his bite. Here the figures are encouraging. True, government on all levels is now taking an additional 9.4 percent of the GNP, compared with its take in the 1940s. But back in that period real disposable personal income, calculated in terms of 1982 dollars, averaged \$4,709 per person. That figure has now risen to

\$9,363, partly because of real gains and partly because a larger proportion of the population now works. In these years average U.S. income rose much faster than the inflation rate, contrary to many people's notions. In other words, despite a bigger tax, the portion of national income people had to spend or save doubled.

How fairly is the income tax burden distributed? From its inception, the income tax was always planned to be progressive in nature, that is, to levy taxes according to ability to pay. Are we still living up to that ideal? Political rhetoric aside, who has benefited most from recent tax cuts?

As most readers probably know by now, even a quick look at the figures demonstrates that the ideal of progressivity is being systematically weakened. The rich have benefited from recent tax cuts far more than the poor and the middle class. Part of the problem is the Social Security payroll tax. Unlike income tax, this tax even in theory is regressive, with the effective rates higher for the poor than for the rich. Because there is a ceiling on how much earnings are subject to the tax, the rate for the lower-income worker is higher than for the well-to-do, and the social security tax takes a sizable amount out of the paycheck of lower-income workers, in many cases coming to more than their income tax.

That is bad enough, but Congress under Mr. Carter and even more under President Reagan has made it worse by also whittling away at the progressive principle of the income tax. In 1955, a family of four making half the median income faced an average tax rate of 4 percent. That same year a similar family making twice the median income had a tax rate of 12.4 percent. Thus the tax rate for the more affluent family was slightly over three times that of the poorer family — an example of progressivity as it was. By 1982 the poorer family still making half the median income had a tax rate of 20.1 percent, while the more comfortable family had a tax rate of 25.95 percent.



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What had been a three-to-one ratio of the difference between the two families had fallen to a 1.3-to-one ratio. Or to put it another way, the rate for the more prosperous family slightly more than doubled, while the poorer family has seen its tax rate go through a five-fold increase. Comparable examples could be drawn from all other tax brackets.

Some time ago presidential counselor Edward Meese assured an interviewer that a progressive income tax was immoral. Apparently in saying this he expressed the real views of the administration. Certainly the whole thrust of the Reagan three-step tax cut was to tilt the income tax structure strongly in favor of the rich over the poor and the middle class, in the process significantly eroding the historic principle of a tax based on ability to pay. Whatever the merits of other complaints about the income tax — and we realize you may have many good ones — this is the one that should receive our first priority.

BLOOD SUPPLY

"We have so enjoyed *Commonweal* these past months," writes a young couple from Chicago, both recent graduates of Notre Dame Law School, "especially in light of the debates that continue to rage within the church and between the church and the outside world."

You say you're stumped at what to give that college graduate in your family this month? And you sometimes wonder how it's going to happen that the conversation, that circulatory system called the "Catholic tradition," will survive and flourish in a culture which blurs and fuzzes all distinctions and edges? A modest proposal: how about putting the two quandaries together? Give the new graduate a year's subscription to *Commonweal*. It's the most economical way we know of to keep "vital spirits" flowing in the blood.

ROME IS NOT MOVED

The Vatican's Rome, the sacred navel of the West: *Roma non transferendum* — it cannot be moved — and yet it has been. The Vatican's treasure of art, symbol of the "deposit of faith" it keeps, is about to move to Chicago from Fifth Avenue's Metropolitan Museum. Once upon a time, Rome's *mysterium tremendum* had been enough to stop Attila the Hun in his tracks (outside Mantua). Nor, for different reasons, had Rome lost awesome power even in the sixteenth century. It shook the scrupulous young Luther so much it took schism to regain his composure. In our own time, Carl Jung passed out at the moment of trying to buy a ticket to Rome. Rome is too much.

There is much revealed in the Vatican exhibit that confirms the providential window-opening of the Good Pope John. Just in the nick of time, we'd guess.

The Vatican show is full of paradoxical irony. It asks us to focus attention on the popes themselves as patrons and collectors. After seeing the exhibit, one wondered whether Luther

didn't have it all wrong to make such a fuss over trade in indulgences. He should have trained his fire on Pope Julius II's inauguration of hoarding the Belvedere Torso out of public sight, hidden in his private garden. The Met's catalogue, and the rush of other publications promoting the show, let us understand the withdrawn, fortress church mentality through the visual prism of art — where seeing is believing, or ground for disbelieving. Somehow the show dismantles more effectively than Luther's polemics do.

No doubt it was a sign of the Renaissance's psychological expansion that Pope Julius began the process of privatizing art — swallowing old and new worlds whole as it were. Nonetheless, his act proved ominous because, with the subsequent help of Descartes's dualism and Newton's mechanism, it set the course toward a trivializing estheticism — art as an object to be warehoused in museums, out of the public forum where the action is. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pontiffs became great innovators in this museum craft, opening their treasures to the public and thus correcting Julius's egocentrism. But by this time, however, a more distressing shift had occurred, not a shift so much as an introversion. Great patrons of art up through the sixteenth century, the popes largely ceased, by the seventeenth, to commission art as the proper humanizing soil for seeding the Gospel's word into the citizen's public square.

Instead, the popes began, like the magnates they were, to collect art-objects — like so many emblems of lost grace. While secular Europe took off on commercial and revolutionary adventure, an increasingly insular Holy See dabbled in the secret arts of Etruscans and Egyptians (though those Egyptian temple-guardian lions are worth the current exhibit!) Pastors put out to pasture by enlightened despots and industrialists, it's as if they no longer recollected how to touch and awaken grace in human limb, eye, ear, and hand-craft — as if the Grail secreted in earth and body eluded them, had to be covered over like Michelangelo's naked saints on the Sistine wall. There is no nineteenth century art in the Met show. The Laocoön complex fascinates; it should.

One would like to say the Vatican's start at a modern collection dislodges, unbinds, these impressions. It does not. The criterion of selection seems to have been a big (safe) name doing something churchy — literally, like the Derain color experiment of that forlorn church at Carrieres-Saint-Denis, or something vaguely connected with traditional iconography like Matisse's cut-out, "the tree of life." Literalism and nostalgia. The throbbing heart of that clandestine search for the *mysterium tremendum* — so palpable in Pollock, Barnett Newman, Rothko, or Clifford Still — is nowhere evident. None of that creative chaos out of which emerges the great amen of the Mass.

"We ask your pardon," said a magnanimous Pope Paul VI addressing a group of artists soon after his election in 1963. And then he asked, "Will the pope again become the artist's friend?" The question still hangs in the air — and will continue to hang so long as the collector mentality dominates the issue.

But the point is not to single out the post-Tridentine popes for opprobrium in this regard. That they hoarded, guarded, and

buried treasure, as it were in a bank vault, is parabolic; they are Everyman — made of the same forgetful carbon as the rest of us are. (Look around you, at the homes and public buildings we raze and build.) And now, remembering itself, the Holy See sends us ancestral gifts, the heart of it a sample of Renaissance color; such stuff may quicken our senses, shock into recognition, wake us to the dreams of which we are made. For we are also such stuff as da Vinci and Michelangelo were made of. "Whence and how do they come?" asks Mozart in speaking of the miracle of his compositions, "I do not know and have nothing to do with it."

Yes, a museum setting often obscures the mystery of creativity, reducing art to glittery stone rather than bread for the soul-starved. This is especially true of the imperialist Met, where despite all the ingenuity the Vatican's art did not show up. Rome cannot be moved. What her art misses, of course, is its home-based adjacency to the West's central liturgical stage — where this sample of our patrimony is ceremonially and ritually bonded to generations of the human passion story that God made his own.

Washington report

FREEZING THE HOUSE

A TWO-YEAR EDUCATION

THE TRADITIONAL RIVALRY between the City of Man and the City of God cooled for a brief moment during the first week of May, as the House of Representatives approved a nuclear freeze resolution on May 4, by a vote of 278-149, and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted, one day earlier, a 150-page pastoral letter on the morality of nuclear weapons, by an overwhelming 238-9.

Both decisions parallel each other in these respects: efforts for both began over two years ago; both statements were expanded considerably as their applications and implications were considered; both statements were actively opposed by the Reagan administration; both statements had the effect of guiding rather than binding; and both reflect a further education, outside the Pentagon, in arms control, military strategy, and weapons systems.

The dramatic growth in the U.S. grass-roots nuclear freeze movement is usually traced to a 1980 memorandum written by Randall Forsberg, entitled "Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race." Forsberg called for the U.S. and the Soviet Union to freeze the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Sparked by this document, a freeze movement was initiated and won referenda in several western Massachusetts state senatorial districts in November 1980; by the 1982 elections, the movement had so expanded that over a quarter of the nation's electorate con-

fronted freeze resolutions on twenty-eight state or local ballots, with twenty-five being passed. In August 1982, a freeze resolution had almost passed the House, falling short by two votes 204-202; the House then accepted substitute language calling for sharp reductions in U.S. and Soviet strategic forces to equal levels, followed by a freeze.

By last March 16, when the next freeze resolution was brought to the House floor, the full impact of the November elections and of the freeze movement had become evident. A dozen of the freeze resolution's opponents of last August had been defeated for reelection. Eleven state legislatures, nine states and the District of Columbia by referendum, 321 city councils, 444 New England town meetings, and 63 county councils had all endorsed freeze resolutions. A December 1982 Gallup poll revealed that seventy-one percent of Americans favored a bilateral nuclear freeze agreement. A wide range of national organizations had come to support a mutual and verifiable nuclear freeze, including the United Auto Workers, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and Common Cause.

As reported out by the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the new resolution called for an immediate, mutual, verifiable freeze on testing, production, and further deployment of nuclear warheads, missiles, and other delivery systems, and for the strategic arms talks to incorporate negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear missiles. It was no surprise that the home state of the resolution's chief sponsor, Foreign Affairs Chairman Clement Zablocki of Wisconsin, had approved a freeze resolution referendum by seventy-five percent, or that, given the nation-wide results, he was joined by 200 colleagues as co-sponsors.

The House Democratic leadership was initially quite sanguine about the passage of the freeze resolution, expecting a 40 to 50 vote margin. In the first major test vote, the administration-backed language, which had won last August, and which called for a reduction of weapons arsenals as the priority and only then for a freeze, lost in a 215 to 209 vote. But as the debate wore on, pertinent questions were raised by opponents. For example, under a freeze what would be done about replacing worn-out weapons or delivery systems? Would modernization be allowed? Would research and development continue in such crucial matters as anti-aircraft and anti-submarine warfare systems? What monitoring agreements would be necessary as the first technical step in the verification process?

Freeze advocates were not prepared with ready or consistent answers. Freeze critics, mostly Republicans but also some Democrats, scored good debating points. The freeze backers (including some Republicans) successfully defended their resolution, revealing impressive Democratic party discipline and a capable cadre of younger leaders able to counter plausible amendments with their own pertinent facts, telling arguments, and qualifying amendments. The freeze debate extended over forty-two hours on six different days to become one of the longer House debates in recent years. About thirty amendments were adopted — some as proposed by freeze opponents,

others as further amended by freeze advocates — which greatly expanded the original text of the resolution.

An amendment that had focused attention on one of the more contentious issues was offered by Dan Lungren of California. The amendment specified that the resolution was not "binding on the president or his negotiators." Lungren pointed out that the freeze proponents were taking contradictory positions on whether the resolution was binding on the administration or simply symbolic. Although the resolution was worded in advisory rather than mandatory terms — the president's negotiators "should" rather than "shall" pursue a freeze — the Foreign Affairs Committee report said that "the purpose of the resolution is to mandate objectives for the conduct" of the arms control negotiations. Lungren viewed the report's language as an unconstitutional intrusion into the president's power to negotiate treaties. Freeze advocates successfully eluded the question of how "binding" the resolution would be by amending the Lungren proposal so that nothing in the resolution would supersede the treaty-making powers of the president under the Constitution.

One of the major amendments upon which the administration and its supporters seized as a sign of victory was originally offered by Elliott Levitas of Georgia. The net effect of the adopted amendment was to require suspension of a freeze agreement if it were not followed by arms reductions within a specified period.

Freeze proponents, however, viewed the amendment as maintaining the core of the resolution's priorities — a freeze first, followed by reductions — and this was so argued by Rep. Levitas in support of his amendment. With the priority remaining a freeze first, advocates argued that the House resolution still represented an implicit repudiation of the administration's position that there was no military parity between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and that an immediate U.S. weapons buildup is necessary to offset Soviet military advantages before an agreement on reductions.

After adoption of the Levitas amendment, leaders on both sides of the debate agreed to move promptly to a final vote — since each could claim some degree of success. The resolution is highly unlikely to pass the Republican-controlled Senate and, should it pass, has been promised a presidential veto.

Nonetheless, the debate has left members of the House better equipped to follow the labyrinthine military strategies and alternative weapons systems underpinning budget resolutions and defense appropriations bills. In having to stand up to the charge of intellectual simplicity inherent in the freeze notion and assume responsibility for its consequences, the House Democrats, as Michael Barone of the *Washington Post* observed, have demonstrated an ability to govern. The administration's intransigence on increasing defense spending and opposing added taxes may continue to stymie the political process to such an extent that the House may be called upon to exercise this ability in a much more significant fashion.

By most accounts, the Reagan administration is now being forced to recognize at least the political importance of arms control. The House action and the bishops' statement were

undoubtedly factors in the administration's new approach to arms control, one marked by: (1) new flexibility in the negotiations on Euromissiles and intercontinental-range bombers and missiles; (2) addressing the serious technical questions surrounding the MX and the single-warhead ICBM; and (3) providing unconditional presidential support for the Scowcroft commission report. As an added indication, the president announced that he is "leaning" toward the "build down" proposal of Senators Cohen and Nunn.

One might hope that the administration's upcoming strategic decisions on nuclear arms will be examined by a more morally sophisticated electorate as a result of the bishops' efforts. Assuredly, presidential policies will be considered by a more technically sophisticated and politically sensitive House as a result of the freeze resolution.

JEREMIAH BARUCH

(Jeremiah Baruch is the pseudonym of a Washington writer with a position in government.)

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

PRISONERS OF STYLE

EMBARRASSED BY MORALITY

THERE IS AN interesting passage in a recent review of Michael Straight's *After Long Silence*. Straight's autobiographical account of his days with the Cambridge Communists is given good solid treatment by H.R. Trevor-Roper, Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, in *The New York Review of Books*, and then suddenly at the end of a sane review there is this remarkable statement: "For this reason, although I can forgive their error and even, at a pinch, their treachery, I cannot forgive their arrogance. The picture of the priestly Blunt, with his thin, precise voice, ordering the lives of others at the behest of 'our friends' in the Kremlin and laying a paternal hand on their shoulders as they leave his presence will remain with me as the perfect icon of the Cambridge Apostle in 1937. So might St. Paul have sent Timothy to the Christian cells of Greece, or the Jesuit general speed a doomed missionary to the secret priest holes of Elizabethan England."

"This reason" — the reason on which he hangs his judgment on that treachery is less offensive than arrogance — is the questionable belief that a left-wing victory in Spain would have led Hitler to conquer Spain and thereby win the war. Quite apart from the merits of this argument, and forgetting the gratuitously anti-Christian sentiments Mr. Trevor-Roper trots out to underscore it, there is the fact that what he says is wrong on the face of it, a weird arrangement of con-

cerns. He is able to forgive error, and that is all well and good, but to prefer treachery to arrogance is downright odd. It is the triumph of style over substance, good manners over real decency or honor. "The self-sufficient Cambridge Communists were convinced that they alone knew how to save the world," Trevor-Roper says, and it is this conviction which galls him.

Which is understandable enough. Too much evil has been done in the name of truth for anyone to leap easily, or even to move at all, into the camp of certainty (whether religious, moral, or political) — Jim Jones makes people wonder why anyone is willing to put that sort of trust in anyone, and it is easy to equate the demand for allegiance of any sort with the mad allegiance which leads to Jonestown, Nazi victories, and holy wars.

But the existence of false messiahs does not mean that there is no such thing as religious truth, or no such thing as genuine moral or religious authority. Hitler and Gandhi both commanded allegiance, but that does not mean that allegiance of any sort should be withheld. The fact that both had followers does not make Martin Luther King and Jim Jones the same. Trevor-Roper's irritation is one which has profound consequences. That irritation, the willingness to equate all forms of conviction with the peculiar form political conviction assumed during the 1930s among the British upper

classes, is really a manifestation of moral chastity in its most extreme form: withhold any allegiance or commitment in order to avoid doing the wrong thing.

Arrogance is, after all, in the eye of the beholder. No doubt Jesus or Gandhi would have offended Mr. Trevor-Roper as much as the Cambridge Apostles. It is much easier to believe that there is not and cannot be any messiah at all than to do the more difficult task of discernment, the task of looking for the truth rather than abandoning the belief that there is any such thing as truth at all. Abandonment is the easier course. There is little strain for an individual who avoids commitment to the search for truth, whatever the truth may be, and a person can live in a form of suspended animation for a lifetime. A culture may exist for a generation or two in such suspension, living from the moral capital of previous generations. But it can be questioned whether any culture which believes in nothing at all except a tolerance for the latest arguments put forward by those in political power (those arguments always get a hearing, in any sort of culture) can last for very long, or if it should last. When the highest wisdom is "don't get hurt; don't make mistakes," the heroic and noble are gone forever. Those words have an antiquated sound; they shouldn't.

More is involved here than a simple fear of making mistakes. There is an aversion to being told by anyone that there is such a thing as a truth which is worth one's life. The good reason for such an aversion is the fact that people have been willing to die for horrible as well as noble beliefs, and Nazis have gone to their deaths with the same firm conviction as early Christian martyrs and those who resisted the Nazis. We revere the latter, don't understand the former, and find

ourselves completely alienated from those who died for the sake of Nazism. The uncomfortable fact is that martyrs in any cause probably all have the same feeling as they go towards it. But the alternative to the nobility of a Gandhi, or a Bonhoeffer, is the empty belief — or not a belief, not even a conviction, but the empty reaction which takes a political form, a response which expresses a form of despair — that no public moral meaning can be found at all. Nothing is worth living or dying for. We are left with forms of polite behavior, and a reliance on the experts who will tell us what we must believe in order to belong to the “real world,” which is, finally, the world of correct opinion.

The despair which is implicit in Trevor-Roper's belief that conviction is worse than bad manners is one result of the collapse of the foundations of our post-Enlightenment culture; as many writers (most notably George Steiner) have pointed out, the Enlightenment dethroned religious and political orthodoxies, and for the past couple of centuries we have acted as if reason and the right sort of education could get us through life. But when the most highly educated society in the West democratically chose Nazism, when it not only accepted a Hitler as leader but cooperated in the murder of millions, everything our faith had been based on vanished. It was not possible to return to the religious and political orthodoxies of the past, nor could any modern orthodoxy satisfy those who were made understandably skeptical of all claims involving the whole of the self. The old ways (which had led to misery and death and the suppression of free thought) were dead, and for awhile there was hope that something better had been born in the effort to dethrone them. But Hitler's ascendancy, and Stalin's murder of even more millions, ended that dream. We are left with a distrust of any claim to truth, and the human need for meaning — which is not at all the same thing as the need for information — is left unsatisfied; or rather, we attempt to satisfy it by looking to sources which are finally too shallow to do the job. We look to experts, for example, and continue to hope that in the right



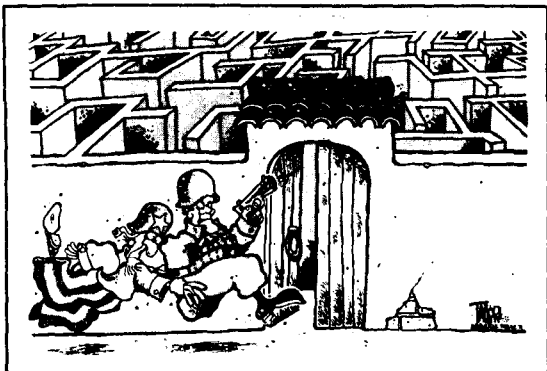
opinion, the right information, we will find the answers we need. This is the remnant of the Enlightenment dream.

The people who still place faith, or what passes for faith, in that dream are offended when its assumptions are challenged. They include not only Mr. Trevor-Roper but, apparently, the editors of the *New York Times*, whose editorial on the final version of the bishops' pastoral on nuclear weapons is as strange in its way as Trevor-Roper's review. I had problems with the pastoral, particularly its relatively uncritical acceptance of the place of the nation-state, but it was a carefully worked-out document, very much in keeping with the traditional Catholic approaches to the place of government and the just war theory. This much the editorial nods to, but then it goes on to criticize what the writer calls the “curious position” of the bishops, who “are not only attacking the main doctrines of the Reagan administration but also straying far from the prevailing theories of the arms control community.” This heresy — the belief that the theories of experts may be challenged from a point of view the experts might find inconvenient — leads the bishops to “undermine any strategy of deterrence by opposing the targeting of Soviet cities — even to threaten retaliation for the destruction of American cities. This insistence, as in the pre-nuclear era, that military attacks must be limited to military targets paradoxically validates the view of those who want to prepare to fight ‘limited’ nuclear war.” Well, no, it really doesn't and the bishops made quite clear the fact that the whole concept of total war (whether conducted by nuclear or conventional means) is immoral. At the same time they voiced profound skepticism

over whether nuclear conflicts could be kept limited, given the nature of the technology. The *Times*, in its need to make the bishops appear naive, ignores this aspect of the pastoral. The editorialist concludes that although we may never love the bomb, we must learn to live with it, since we can't un-invent it. We must “manage the problems it poses.”

What the bishops are saying, though, is clear enough: if something is inherently immoral, we must do more than learn to live with it. You can't imagine the *Times* saying that we must learn to live with slavery, genocide, or child abuse, trying not to abolish them but rather to manage the problems they pose. (I can imagine the *Times* saying that we must learn to live with slavery, some time before it was abolished, back in the days when abolitionists were naive.) What really seems to offend the editorialist is the claim that morality can matter enough to force us to oppose even experts and presidents. It is another case of religion refusing to take the place assigned to it by a secular society with a stake in seeing religion made an innocuous, subjective taste rather than a force for personal or social transformation. The editorial concludes with a bit of finger-wagging: “There's no place to hide, even in morality.” But the bishops aren't trying to hide, only trying to point out to a society which finds such reminders inconvenient, that there are moral truths which are worth living and even dying for. There are some things we may not do, even in order to survive. That is a hard truth — it always has been — and it is much easier to believe that there is no such thing as truth at all. To a person who believes that one thing (the absolute truth that there are no absolute truths) any counter-claim will look arrogant, ill-mannered, naive, or all three. But this view is finally a hopeless one, and the paradox is that by asserting the fact that some things are worth dying for, we witness to a depth of life which the pragmatic survivalism of hawks and genteel liberals can't account for. It is possible to hide in morality; it is also possible to hide from it.

JOHN GARVEY



DON QUIXOTE HAD NOTHING ON US

The El Salvador labyrinth

JIM CHAPIN & JACK CLARK

"Ideas have consequences, bad ideas have bad consequences."
Jeane J. Kirkpatrick

AMBASSADOR Kirkpatrick is alleged by the *New York Times* to be the chief intellectual force behind the Reagan administration's Central American policy. If this is true, she is absolutely correct about the consequences of bad ideas. Ronald Reagan's speech to a joint session of Congress on April 27 illustrated her case perfectly.

The central thesis of the president's speech and of his administration's policy in Central America is that we must resist Communist expansionism in Central America as surely as we resisted Communist expansionism in Europe after 1945. Reagan made the parallel explicit by invoking Truman. Such resistance is necessary, in the Reagan-Kirkpatrick view, not only for reasons relating directly to our own security, but also to make life more pleasant and decent for the majority of the people of Central America. Following Kirkpatrick's famous distinction, we are backing "moderately repressive authoritarian regimes" instead of the more brutally effective totalitarian Communist regimes which threaten to replace them. More crudely and polemically, we are fighting to prevent Central America from "becoming another Eastern Europe."

But Latin America already *is* Eastern Europe, *our* Eastern Europe. Just as the Kremlin prefers local oligarchs like Jaruzelski to do its dirty work, U.S. policy-makers prefer indirect solutions (Guatemala 1954, Brazil 1964, Chile 1973) to direct interventions like the Dominican Republic in 1965. Comparing Soviet oppression in Eastern Europe to U.S. domination of Latin America may seem extreme or provocative. But the arguments against the comparison just don't hold up.

1. *A good, open, and democratic society like ours just isn't*

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as ruthless as a closed tyranny like the Soviet Union. In the ways in which our own people are treated versus the conditions faced by Soviet citizens, that's true. The same comparison could have been made in the ancient Hellenic world between Athens and Sparta. The good, democratic Athenians slaughtered the people of Mytilene; the evil Spartans were relatively restrained in foreign policy. A variant on the argument has it that U.S. actions are restrained by democratic institutions while the Soviets don't face internal restraints. (Oddly enough, that virtue of our system is most often trumpeted by people who decry our domestic qualms and wish we acted more "realistically" and intervened more boldly, presumably like the Russians.) Democratic restraints may indeed have limited U.S. policies in some cases, but again, historic experience doesn't bear out that this has yet made a decisive difference in Latin America. Events in Chile in 1973 were far bloodier than anything that happened in Poland recently and represented the same level of superpower intervention. Ironically, Pinochet was one of the few leaders who expressed understanding of Jaruzelski's position; he, after all, knows how difficult it is to rule against the will of the working class.

2. *Cuba and Nicaragua prove that it's possible to leave the U.S. sphere of influence, but no country can leave the Soviet bloc.* Again, that argument is usually advanced by people who actually want to overthrow Cuba and Nicaragua, thus formulating a sort of capitalist counterpart to the Brezhnev Doctrine. This argument, too, fails the test of history. Of the eight nations under Soviet domination at the end of World War II, two (Albania and Yugoslavia) have left the bloc, one (Rumania) has secured a great deal of freedom within the bloc. The largest and most powerful nation ever to enter the Soviet bloc (China) has become the USSR's most immediate and feared enemy. The Soviets also withdrew from their section of Austria.

3. *You must draw distinctions between authoritarian and totalitarian governments.* This is Kirkpatrick's major point. She's right; that's a useful distinction. Poland is an authoritarian country, El Salvador totalitarian. If Poland were El Salvador, Cardinal Glemp would have been assassinated in his

cathedral, and the crowd mourning him would have been machine-gunned in the streets. When Lech Walesa and his fellow-leaders of Solidarity called a press conference, they would have "disappeared" to be found the next day with their left arms, tongues, and hearts cut out. Government soldiers would rape and kill nuns, disembowel "subversive" priests, and murder thousands of peasants and workers for years on end without fear of being prosecuted.

STILL, REAGAN and his advisors persist in seeing El Salvador as part of the democratic world resisting Communist tyranny. In part that view can be attributed to blind and nearly paranoid anti-Communism. But one needs to be careful about seeing the administration view as simple anti-Communism. In large part, it derives from a good or at least very appealing idea which has been misused. The non-Communist U.S. left has long sought a "third force" in world politics between the Soviet bloc and the often domineering, even brutal foreign policies of the United States and its allies with their remnants of colonial empires. Liberals at least as far back as Franklin

Roosevelt articulated a policy of building up democratic forces in opposition to all tyranny, left or right, East or West. Much of the vitality of the idea in the post-World-War-II world came from the forceful articulation of "third camp" politics by a small and intellectually interesting group of Marxists trained in the Trotskyist tradition. Max Schachtman was the leader of this group, and in the late 1940s its adherents included Irving Howe, Norman Mailer, Dwight Macdonald, and dozens of trade union activists and lesser-known intellectuals. Opposing Stalinism but also trying to avoid a cold-war defense of regimes they considered reactionary, this small band looked to the creation of a third camp of revolutionary democrats and socialists who would break loose from the sterile grip of both imperialist blocs. The group trained a generation of influential thinkers and made some waves within the U.S. liberal community, but the revolutionary third force never came into being. By the mid-1960s, Schachtman and some of his most loyal followers had revised their theory in light of the struggle in Vietnam. The third camp in world politics could only emerge, they concluded, in the context of capitalist societies

SLIDE TO THE RIGHT

AN EVER NARROWING SOCIAL BASE

SINCE THE COUP of October, 1979, one can trace the steps by which El Salvador's new government coalition became steadily smaller and more right-wing.

The original coalition established by the coup included all political forces from the Social Democrats (MNR) over to the moderate right in the army (represented by Defense Minister Guillermo Garcia). The coalition's leader was Colonel Alfredo Majano. Within two months, however, efforts at reform by the new coalition were stymied. In early January, 1979, the MNR representatives resigned from the *junta*, and the Christian Democrats (PDC) began to play a larger role. In March, 1980, the left wing of the PDC left the *junta*, while the center of that party, represented by Napoleón Duarte, took on a larger role. March was also the month of the assassination of Archbishop Romero. In May, Colonel Majano was demoted.

In June, the hard right, led by Roberto D'Aubuisson, began a determined effort to destroy the remnants of the government. Even the milk-and-water reformism of Duarte was offensive to them. (D'Aubuisson accused Duarte of being a watermelon: "green on the outside, red on the inside.") The hard right realized that the total domination of the Salvadoran economy by a coalition of the oligarchy and the military could not last if this mild reform, indeed even the *appearance* of reform, was allowed to persist. On a visit to the United States in June, D'Aubuisson was encouraged by his meeting with many

Reaganites.

After Reagan's election in November, the hard right went all-out. On November 27, 1980, five civilian leaders of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FRD) "disappeared" and were killed in the middle of San Salvador. On December 6, four American church women were killed, and Colonel Majano was removed from the *junta*. On January 10, land reformer Rodolfo Viera and two representatives of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) were murdered.

But at the last minute, the not-yet-in-power Reaganites made it clear that they would not approve a coup, and during the month of December, Duarte was able to hold his position against the right. The rebel's "final offensive" on January 10, 1981, was a dismal failure, with Carter authorizing military aid to El Salvador in the following week.

There was a double irony to American policy at this juncture. Despite current Democratic grumbling about U.S. policy, the Democrats under Carter, here as in other policy arenas, were moving in a "Reaganite" direction; and after Reagan's victory, the Reaganites, who had done their best to undermine Carter's Salvadoran policies, found themselves imitating them.

From the crisis of December 1980-January 1981 until the elections of March 1982, El Salvador had two governments in cloaked competition, frozen in their relations with each other by American pressure. Of those who had played important roles in late 1979, only Duarte and Garcia were still around. Duarte, unwilling to call upon the "dangerous" masses for aid but nonetheless hated by business, appeared crucial to the public image of the government in the United States and for gaining the sup-

with at least limited degrees of pluralism. The revised Schactmanite theory coincided with traditional cold war liberalism which Schactman and his earlier followers had bitterly opposed. The timing of the change in the theory proved fortunate for it brought new vitality to that cold war liberalism which was collapsing under the weight of liberal opposition to the war in Vietnam. Pure *realpolitik* might not have sufficient appeal to Americans to justify a terrible war, nor were the various Saigon regimes exactly inspiring. But if the Saigon government could be seen as the necessary incubator of authentic democracy, then all kinds of revolutionary hopes could be invested in an otherwise corrupt and hapless regime. Through this rather twisted route a theory having its origins in Leon Trotsky's vision of the permanent revolution became an inspiration for the growing neoconservative movement around *Commentary*. And from Trotsky to Schactman to Podhoretz, Kirkpatrick, and directly on to Ronald Reagan, one can trace the impact of this idea.

What does an obscure semi-Trotskyist insight have to do with our current intervention? Quite simply, it provides

the rationale for our endless search for a political center on the far right of El Salvador's spectrum. As often happens with debased theories, evidence gets stretched thin to cover the theory. That's happening right now with the Salvadoran elections of 1982 and the persistent myth-making around them. A year ago, when we wrote about that election in these pages, the myth was beginning to develop. The myth persists, and it is worth some effort to go back to the evidence and look at some trends since then.

Reagan and his advisors have ordained El Salvador a democracy by the simple fact of elections having occurred on March 28 of last year. That the physical safety and lives of oppositionists who might have participated in those elections was not guaranteed seems not to matter. According to the myth, the elections were a resounding defeat for the guerrilla opposition, a triumph for moderation and democracy, and a justification for U.S. involvement. Yet little more than a year after the elections, the guerrillas seem stronger than ever and control large portions of the country. Reagan's request for an emergency aid appropriation is aimed at postponing a guerrilla

port of the world Christian Democratic movement. Garcia, representing the moderate right in the army, had skillfully outmaneuvered those to his left in the first six months after the coup, but was now beginning to lose his "balance-wheel" position. The hard right continued to have some U.S. support (Jesse Helms and the like) but felt frustrated by the Reagan "sell out."

This stalemate was also reflected in the guerrillas' attempt to reorganize and in the growing moderation of their platform, ironically a reflection of the growing Communist influence in the revolutionary coalition. It was the United States, looking to shore up Duarte, which finally destroyed him by insisting on elections. The elections were at first opposed by the right, but then D'Aubuisson saw the opportunity that the elections presented. Although the Christian Democrats did better than might have been expected in the vote, they did not, of course, win an absolute majority. A coalition of the right did get such a majority, and, except for the U.S. pressure, mediated through General Garcia, the Christian Democrats would have been removed from the government altogether. Duarte was out, and an inoffensive army puppet, Alvaro Magana, became provisional president.

This meant the endangering of even the shreds of land reform. Duarte was challenged by a faction of the PDC to his right, led by the leading Christian Democrat still in government, Foreign Minister Fidel Chavez Mena. So far Duarte has fought off this challenge. Meanwhile General Garcia became the next target. In January 1983 he was challenged by the disobedience of Colonel Sigifredo Ochoa, the military figure who "ruled" the region of Cabanas. (It is no coincidence that in the March 28 elections Cabanas gave the PDC its lowest percentage and the

PCN its highest percentage of any of the fourteen departments, demonstrating that the election results had much to do with the military control of each department.)

This marked the beginning of the end for Garcia, who finally left power in April 1983. American attitudes towards Garcia had undergone a shift familiar to those who remember our behavior in Vietnam. At first our government supported Garcia as a "moderate" (Diem?) until we found out that his "moderation" (necessarily in view of the nature of the society in which he operates) involved great tolerance for corruption and inefficiency. Then the government began to speak with admiration of hard-working, tough "real fighters" like Ochoa (Ky?) without fully recognizing that *these* characteristics are linked to extremist political positions.

If the United States had come in full strength to support the original October 1979 coup *junta* it is possible that something good might have resulted. But that opportunity has been missed. Since then, the only effect of American intervention has been to slow down and sometimes conceal the steady retreat of the government back to the narrow social base of 1972-79 that made the coup and today's revolutionary turmoil inevitable. Given the narrowing social base for the government and the widening social base of the guerrilla opposition, the only "hope" for guerrilla defeat rests on a larger-scale reenactment of the *matanza* of 1932. Most likely it is too late even for that, and barring the sending of American troops, our present level of intervention probably only slows down a guerrilla victory and makes it likely that the post-victory struggle will be between the Communists and the far left rather than between the Communists and the center.

J.C. & J.C.

victory in the field which seems a very real possibility. The government, meanwhile, is in the hands of rightists who are losing ground to more extreme rightists.

As we wrote a year ago here, the March 28 election only served to decide things within one group in El Salvador: the governing coalition. That coalition had been moving rightward since the reform coup of October, 1979, and the election hastened and legally confirmed the rightward drift. Far from being defeated by the elections, the revolutionary opposition was largely unaffected by them. A careful look at the turnout figures and results indicated that large regions were either effectively controlled or seriously contested by the guerrillas.

THE REBEL COALITION

REVOLUTION, TOO, HAS ITS POLITICS

IT IS VERY difficult to predict the behavior of guerrilla movements once they take power. Few thought Castro would establish a Communist Cuba; no one thought that Pol Pot would kill half the Cambodian population. The politics of the hard core of the revolutionary forces in El Salvador don't offer much hope for those who expect a humane, pluralist society to emerge from a guerrilla victory. These groups are far more violent than the Sandinistas were or are, and have a record, unlike the Sandinistas, of killing each other and carrying out violence against civilians as well as exposing civilians to violence.

The first Salvadoran groups to take to military struggle in the early 1970s were part of a world-wide tendency for ultra-leftists, inspired by what they took to be the lessons of Vietnam and Cuba, and by the heroic death of Che Guevara, to break from the dull safety of orthodox Communism into armed resistance. In many respects, their political stance was almost indistinguishable from the positions of the Red Brigades, the Weathermen, or the Baader-Meinhof Gang. While the beliefs of these three groups about the nature of their own societies were fantasies, a similar point of view about El Salvador was, unfortunately, closer to reality.

The development of these groups resulted from events particular to El Salvador as well. The Communist party of Salvador (PCS) was the oldest political party in the country, and, after the *matanza* of 1932, it had stuck resolutely to a "political" road. By 1969 this road seemed to be offering promise: an opposition alliance actually gained control of the National Assembly. But the "soccer war" with Honduras ended the good times. Thousands of Salvadoran refugees returned from Honduras. The important Honduran market was lost. The governing coalition was able to sweep the 1970 elections for the Assembly by running "heroes of the war."

The Communists reacted by clinging ever more tightly to their "reformist" strategy, helping to organize the

"The election was held. The forms of democratic capitalism are present. We can't turn our backs. If we persevere, a political center committed to democracy and social justice will emerge. If we don't, all might be lost in the darkness of Soviet-style totalitarianism." The conclusions of this argument may be anti-Soviet but its form mirrors the arguments of those true-believing Marxists who know that the Soviet Union is a bad society yet stumble around trying to explain the ways in which it remains "progressive," assuring themselves that the ultimate success of the Soviet "experiment" is just around the corner, and insisting that it must be defended at all costs.

An ideology or world view applied well to a local situa-

coalition that was to back Duarte for president in 1972. Cayetano Carpio, former secretary general of the party, disgusted by the party's support for the Honduran war and its failure to consider revolutionary struggle, founded the FPL (Popular Liberation Forces) in 1970. In the next year the ERP (People's Revolutionary Army) developed from the left wing of the Christian Democrats and from other Communist breakaways. During this period, these groups were torn by complicated ideological struggles; the most notorious incident was the May 1975 split in the ERP which led to the murder of writer Roque Dalton and the development of a group of Dalton supporters, the FARN (Armed Forces of National Resistance). These forces began to gain recruits after the theft of the 1972 election, but remained relatively unimportant until they began to organize their own mass popular organizations in 1974-75. The FPL was closely associated with the BPR (Popular Revolutionary Bloc) and the FARN with FAPU (Front of Unified Popular Action).

The theft of the 1977 elections was far more blatant than that of 1972, reflecting the diminishing ability of the oligarchy to mobilize peasant votes. The elections were followed by a massacre of protesting students on January 28, 1977. The ERP later founded its "mass organization," LP-28 (Popular Leagues of the 28th of February), to commemorate the date. In the following two years the resisting forces began for the first time to take on the quality of mass movements.

Of the different rebel groups, the FPL was the largest, most "orthodox" (in its opposition to the "revisionist bureaucracies" of Communism), and best-organized, while its ally, the BPR, was easily the most important of the "mass organizations." The FARN was the richest military group, thanks to a series of kidnappings of prominent businessmen from major corporations. The ERP had the most purely militarist approach and a reputation for being the most efficient fighters. There was some tendency for geographical division between the groups, with FPL strongest in the center of the country and ERP in the east.

All three groups responded uncertainly to the October 1979 coup, but on balance felt that it was an attempt by the

tion where there is a rich understanding of the history and conditions can provide powerful insights. Too often, left and right apply ideological preconceptions blindly. In El Salvador, as we wrote last year about the election, a lack of understanding and appreciation of Salvador's history on all sides of the U.S. debate dooms our policy there. In the endless and fruitless search for a political center by both the Carter and Reagan administrations (and it's worth noting that their policies are not all that different), a recently published book, *El Salvador in Transition* by Enrique Baloyra, provides some worthwhile guidance.

Baloyra traces the history of efforts to reform El Salvador

peacefully and legally. Not as "backward" a country as North Americans sometimes assume, El Salvador is the most industrialized nation in Central America. At various points, parts of its ruling elite expressed a desire for a Mexican-style system with a multi-class, all-embracing political party. At other times, the promise of legal elections and democratic participation was offered. The left, including especially the Communist left, was willing to participate. In 1944, 1960, 1972, and 1979, the left was either driven out or betrayed. A large section of the ruling elite simply refused to end terrorism in the countryside and tolerate a democracy without coercion. Such democracy would constitute a social revolution. That's the

military to defuse popular resistance. Within two months of the coup, however, a shift of crucial importance took place. The Communists (PCS) finally abandoned the "political" road to power and created its own small military force, FAL (Armed Forces of Liberation). In consultation with Fidel Castro, the FAL, FARN, and FPL joined in coalition. It appears that the FPL at this point was already working toward coalition, but the Cubans provided important help. Just as U.S. action has retarded but not changed the drift of the government, so Cuba's presence has sped up but not changed the evolution of the insurgency. On January 3, 1980, the Minister of Education in the first post-coup government, Salvador Samayoa, resigned and joined the FPL.

The first 14 months of the new coalition were noticeably uneasy. The ERP joined the original three groups in May to form the DRU (Unified Revolutionary Directorate), but within a few months the FARN withdrew. After the mysterious death of its leader, Ernesto Jovel, FARN rejoined. With the addition of a small new group, the PRTC (Central American Revolutionary Workers Party), it was possible to form the present FMLN (Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation) in October. Meanwhile, the political side of the revolutionary coalition was developing. It began with a coalition of the "mass" political wings of the armed groups, FAPU, BPR, LP-28, and UDN, in January 1980, and expanded on April 1 with the addition of the social-democratic MNR (National Revolutionary Movement), dissident Christian Democrats, and most of the labor unions of the country into the FDR (Democratic Revolutionary Front).

The DRU, the governing body of the FMLN, consists of the leader of each of the five military groups, plus extra representatives from the FPL (formerly, Ana Maria) and the PCS and the eight comandantes. The seven-member political-diplomatic commission which coordinates FDR-FMLN political activities consists of representatives of the MNR (Guillermo Ungo), the PCS, two small Christian Democratic splinters, FAPU, LP-28, and FPL (Samayoa).

The FDR has importance because of its international connections, and its respectability in the cities. In any

negotiated settlement it would play a key role, although the U.S., despite loud comments about its desire to "split" the political guerrillas from the military ones, has done its best to discredit the FDR and the forces represented in it. As for the FMLN, the three most important groups are the FPL, the ERP, and the FAL (PCS). The Communists lack the military strength even of the FARN, but because of their better bureaucratic organization and their international connections, as well as their continued adherence to a "moderate" popular-front strategy, have gained steadily in strength in the FMLN since its founding.

The FPL, always the largest of the guerrilla groups, has suffered badly in recent months. According to the Nicaraguan government, a member of the FPL murdered its second-in-command, Ana Maria, and when Carpio learned of this he committed suicide. The same sources report that Carpio had abandoned his long-standing opposition to a negotiated settlement, something for which we have no independent evidence. This leaves long-time "moderate" and recent FPL recruit, Salvador Samayoa as the leading FPL figure, as well as removing the two FPL representatives on the DRU.

The ERP is politically the most inconsistent of the organizations. Its line has varied wildly over time, although it has consistently been the most violent of the groups. It now seems to have the most military power. Its leaders, Joaquin Villabolas, was the killer of Roque Dalton. There is some evidence that he has accepted a "moderate" strategy and long-term alliance with the PCS. Villabolas may see the opportunity to be the Fidel Castro of this revolution. A combination of the PCS organization with the ERP army would be a formidable combination.

Every sign suggests that the military capacity of the guerrillas is rising; that probably most of the country is under their control, which was not true even a year ago; that, through sometimes ruthless measures, their unity is increasing; and that their political line has changed from that of a small vanguard in the hills to a broad popular-front coalition. This strategy, although it reveals little about what the guerrillas would actually do in power, vastly increases their chances of victory. J.C. & J.C.

social revolution U.S. policy, even U.S. policy under Ronald Reagan, claims to want. But you can't conduct a social revolution under the aegis of the class which opposes the revolution. It would be as if the British were to have supported the South in the American Civil War as a means of gaining the abolition of American slavery. A large section of El Salvador's ruling class considers unionization, genuine land reform, and the other social goals the U.S. claims we're backing to be nothing less than Communism.

Under these conditions, it is patronizing in the extreme for U.S. policy-makers to assume that the democratic left has sided with Communist and ultra-left guerrillas out of some sort of "soft-headed romanticism." The moderate left has formed a coalition with the far left because it has nowhere else to go. Illusions about the revolutionary opposition are not necessary or helpful. The armed ultra-leftists began their fighting in the cities, have repeatedly shown scorn for all bourgeois democratic forms, and have been compared by some who know them well to the Pol Pot forces. The Communists are a different and far more moderate group. The ultra-left guerrillas took up their guns while the Communists were still seeking a legal and peaceful road. And the Communists now are pushing a more moderate line. In this context, the deaths of two leaders of the ultra-left forces, Salvador Cayetano Carpio (supposedly by suicide) and Melida Anaya Montes — Comandante Ana Maria — look suspicious.

The Communists may be repeating the sort of bloody internal discipline exercised during the Spanish Civil War when armed elements to their left (the POUM led by Andres Nin) were eliminated. In the absence of the eloquence of a fighter-observer like George Orwell, of a network of world-wide Trotskyist support such as Nin and the POUM had, and of the personal and political attractiveness of the Catalonian leftists in Spain, the deaths of Ana Maria and Carpio and the destruction of the Salvadoran ultra-left are receiving less attention than Nin's death did. It's worth remembering that the Communists have good reasons for avoiding a strategy which insists on armed resistance and the victorious march to the capital. A prolonged struggle could heighten the danger for Nicaragua, Cuba, even the Soviet Union. During the course of a long struggle, the other armed groups in the opposition also gain advantages while in a coalition which reaches power through negotiations, the Communists can exercise their bureaucratic strengths, which are considerable. In a prolonged war, the Communists will fight it out with the various ultra-leftist factions for ultimate control; in a legal, electoral, or negotiated settlement, the power struggle on the left will be between the Communists (who will control many popular institutions and command obvious international support) and the left Christian Democrats and social democrats (who will have the support of large sections of the middle class, as well as of the church, and command a different and broader but less intense international support).

Where does that leave the U.S.? One can't resist the Vietnam analogy in examining Reagan's policies. Obviously the analogy fails in some crucial ways: El Salvador is

closer, more important to us, more vulnerable to our power. In two important respects, though, our Salvadoran policy is like our Vietnam policy: (1) each step is calculated not so much to win or advance a long-term strategic goal as to avoid losing; and (2) maneuvering has already begun in domestic U.S. politics to pin the blame on the other guy for losing El Salvador.

Leslie Gelb and Richard Betts made the first point about Vietnam in their book *The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked*: "It could almost be said, in fact, that the strategy of perseverance was chosen more for the means it employed than for the ends it expected to achieve, more for the problems it avoided than for the ones it solved." So, too, in El Salvador. Administration officials, speaking "off the record" to major newspapers, talk of a protracted war in Central America lasting seven years. They express doubt about Americans' willingness to see it through, but they decide to muddle on. Lost in all this is a key nineteenth-century understanding that statesmanship must be based on an accurate assessment of capabilities and results. Particularly important in this view is the effect of any foreign struggle on one's own society. If a republic cannot sustain a nasty little imperial frontier war in the age of mass politics and mass media, then the solution must be either to change the republic or end the war.

Changing the republic is exactly what the most cynical wing of the Reagan coalition is about. *New York Times* columnist William Safire has been dropping warnings that the Democrats should beware lest they're blamed for losing El Salvador. This is getting to be a wearisome technique on the part of the American right. Get the U.S. involved in backing losers in a foreign war; then when the citizenry naturally tires of trying to make up for the deficiencies of our ally, charge that the war was lost only because of a loss of will. Then, with strong intimations of treason, one can blame the liberal Democrats for losing _____. (Choose China, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, but not Cuba, which the Republicans "lost.") Actually, loss of will is always the reason wars end. The Japanese could have gone on fighting after Hiroshima and Nagasaki except that they "lost the will."

Brushing away all the brave rhetoric and the brash threats, Reagan's policy is defeatist. An alternative could be shaped around the region-wide negotiations which the "Contadora group" (Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and Panama) have suggested. Beyond that, there is the concept of "Finlandization," which could serve as a useful model for the region. Finland has become nearly a curse word for the neoconservatives and the American right; but if Afghanistan and Poland could achieve Finlandization (internal affairs remaining their own business so long as they avoid becoming enemies with their superpower neighbor), that would represent a great advance in world politics. Only old illusions about rolling back the Soviet empire until the USSR itself collapses offer any more room for the Poles or the Afghans. But Finlandization is a prudent, real-world possibility; rolling back Soviet power and precipitating Soviet collapse is not. Similarly, in Central America, an agreement whereby the nations of that region

would be free to work out their own political systems but bound not to become our enemies or join alliances against us could prove workable. The model might even extend to Cuba.

Given the confused muddle that currently passes for administration thinking, such an initiative is unlikely. At one point the administration speaks of "isolating" Mexico on the Central American question. Then Kirkpatrick and friends say that

we are of course defending Mexico against falling dominoes. The president takes to the airwaves to say that we have to fight to show our allies that we're brave and trustworthy.

We can't help thinking of Don Quixote. His attack on a windmill no doubt convinced onlookers of his willingness to fight, but presumably few of them were inspired to seek him out as an ally or leader on pressing real-world concerns.



NOT AFRAID TO CHALLENGE GOVERNMENT POLICY

Why the pastoral is shocking

GERALD P. FOGARTY

IN 1869, as the Catholic bishops gathered for the First Vatican Council, Ralph Waldo Emerson commented that their deliberations were "interesting to the Catholics and a few abnormal readers, interested as the billiard players in the contest of billiard champions." Almost a century later, there seemed to be more "billiard players" to judge from the extensive news-coverage of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Yet the American bishops failed to grasp the opportunity presented by the publicity to explain Catholicism to American society and to exercise, if not leadership, influence within that society.

The bishops at Vatican II had fought against the charges that Catholics were not American and had breathed a sigh of relief that being a Catholic did not prevent the election of John Kennedy; they had also been successful in having the Council accept the uniquely American tradition of religious liberty. In the post-conciliar years, American society began to change. The civil rights movement, which did have strong Catholic support, and the painful experience of the Vietnam war distracted from the Council's reforms before the bishops had a chance to digest and implement them. All most people knew of the Council was that the Mass was put in the vernacular. Twenty years after the Council, the bishops are again in the news, this time for their stance on an issue many Americans wish to consider strictly political—the nuclear arms race.

Critics of the bishops' projected pastoral have surfaced inside and outside the Catholic church. Some political cartoons—e.g., one showing a bishop in a confessional listening intently to a Soviet commissar—could well have been published in any number of nineteenth-century, anti-Catholic journals. William Buckley previewed for his readers his new line of a blend of 65 percent nostalgia for the good old days of

comfortable Catholicism (complete with the Latin liturgy) and 35 percent prediction that Catholics would pay no more heed to this new pastoral than they did to *Humanae Vitae*. Not only did the White House attempt to warn the bishops off the issue (in a letter published first in the *New York Times*), but Charles Hernu, the French defense minister, referred to "the American episcopate that sends letters to French bishops and prelates that are perhaps more demoralizing than are the [neutralist] movements in West Germany." The American church has not drawn such attention from France since conservative French churchmen, fearful of the growing military power of the United States and of the American notion of religious liberty, succeeded in having Americanism condemned in 1899.

Meg Greenfield, editor of the editorial page of the *Washington Post*, may well have published the most balanced reaction to the bishops' pastoral. She not only defended their right as citizens to speak out but she also queried why it had taken them so long. Why so long indeed? The pastoral does represent a new departure for American bishops. Why it has taken them so long and why their statement has drawn such attention can be answered, in part, through understanding the historical evolution of Catholicism as an integral part of American society.

The bishops' criticism of government policy has come as a shock to many Americans, Catholic and Protestant alike, long accustomed to considering religion as a strictly "private" matter. On the eve of the Revolution, Charles Carroll of Carrollton may well have set an unfortunate tone for Catholics when a Tory opponent challenged him on his right to political views, though as a Catholic he was disenfranchised. "What my speculative notions on religion may be," he wrote, "this is neither the place nor time to declare; my political principles ought only to be questioned on the present occasion; surely they are constitutional. . . ." Privatization of Catholicism was intensified by the nativist reaction to nineteenth-century Catholic immigrants, who began a long career of trying to prove they were Americans. After the Ursuline Convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, was burned in 1833, the nuns were told

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they had no right to sue because they owed allegiance to a foreign temporal ruler, the pope.

Catholics, then, had to prove their temporal loyalty to the United States while retaining their spiritual loyalty to the pope, though he happened, in the nineteenth century, also to be the temporal ruler of the papal states—this was the distinction drawn in the bishops' pastoral of 1837. The desire to prove their loyalty to the nation and its laws led Catholics to take no notable part in the abolitionist movement, though their failure to take a stance against slavery was also aggravated by the abolitionists' being also anti-Catholic—Lyman Beecher had preached the sermons in Boston which led to the burning of the Charlestown convent and his daughter, Harriet Beecher Stowe, had written several anti-Catholic works. Catholics and their leaders, then, tended to ignore issues which had become "political," with exceptions to be noted below.

ONE WAY for Catholics to prove their loyalty to the nation was to serve patriotically in the nation's wars. Often, however, their efforts fell upon deaf or insensitive ears. In 1898, suspicion was raised that American Catholics might refuse to fight against Catholic Spain. The suspicion was reminiscent of the French and Indian War when Catholics in colonial Maryland and Pennsylvania were disarmed out of fear that their religious beliefs would supersede their political loyalties and cause them to ally with Catholic France. Catholics, in general, supported the Spanish-American War, only to hear President McKinley state that the American armed forces had no choice but to capture the Philippine Islands "and to educate the Filipinos and to uplift and civilize and Christianize them." Catholicism apparently was not Christian even for a president who counted among his most outspoken supporters leading bishops like John Ireland of St. Paul.

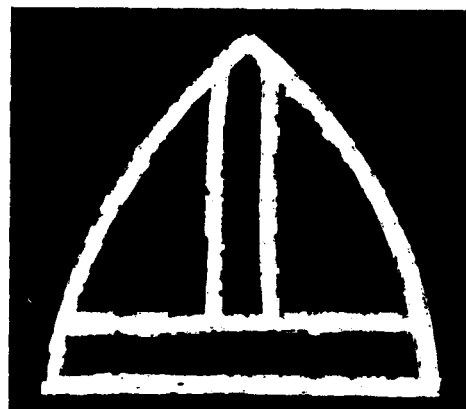
Catholics had again found themselves on the defensive, though they took part in a war against a Catholic nation. Their defensiveness increased under the presidency of Woodrow Wilson. As a historian, Wilson had not hidden his dislike for hyphenated Americans and had written disparagingly of those immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who had tainted the purity of the American people. As president, he ignored the overtures of Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore to remain neutral toward the Mexican revolution and recognized the government of Venustiano Carranza, who was persecuting the Catholic church. He considered the peace overtures of Pope Benedict XV as little more than efforts to settle the "Roman Question," the status of the papacy in regard to the Kingdom of Italy, or to prevent the defeat of the largely Catholic Austro-Hungarian Empire. When approached at the peace conference on Irish independence, he admitted that he denied himself the "personal satisfaction" of telling "the Irish to go to hell." Patrick Hayes, the future cardinal archbishop of New York, summed up the Catholic perception of Wilson by stating: "he certainly was not sympathetic to us."

During World War I, American Catholics either fought in the armed forces or raised substantial funds for the war effort. German-Americans fought against the nation of their ancestors

and Irish-Americans temporarily put aside their antagonism for Britain to join other Americans on the side of the Allies. But at war's end, they found themselves the subject of "scholarly" studies showing that Catholics were in disproportionate numbers among the ranks of deserters.

The 1920s witnessed the resurgence of anti-Catholicism. In 1925, the Ku Klux Klan paraded 35,000 strong down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, propagandizing their hatred for Catholics, Jews, and Blacks. It was an era when anti-Catholicism seemed to some to be a political advantage. Klan rallies spoke of the Jesuits having their cannon trained on the Capitol. Though Jesuits are legendarily ingenious, even their enemies must have doubted that they could have wrought destruction with the two pieces of artillery which then graced the lawn of Georgetown University but which had arrived in Maryland on *The Ark* in 1634. Senator Tom Heflin of Alabama harangued his colleagues about the threat of the Knights of Columbus and argued that there was undue Catholic influence in the Navy from the fact that the church pennant, emblazoned with a cross (for Heflin, a Catholic symbol), flew above the national flag on all warships during religious services; it mattered not to him that the Department of the Navy attested that the pennant had been in use since the Revolutionary War.

NOT ALL THE Catholic responses to this prejudice were well advised. In 1926, Cardinal George Mundelein of Chicago sought to offset the show of Klan power with a display of Catholic might at the first International Eucharistic Congress held in the United States. One million gathered for the ceremonies on the shores of Lake Michigan. The festivities included the arrival of ten cardinals on a unique, seven-car train, specially built by the Pullman Company, painted cardinalial red, and nicknamed "The Red Special." The train had been given the right-of-way from New York across the country and had made several ceremonial stops on the way. With Mundelein already present in Chicago, there were in all eleven cardinals on the station platform—the largest number ever assembled in the United States and the show was not yet complete. That evening, Cardinal Dennis Dougherty of Philadelphia arrived in the special car provided him by the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad; the next morning, Cardinal William Henry O'Connell of Boston set ashore from his private yacht.



But such a display of popish pomp may well have had the opposite effect to that Mundelein intended; it may have increased the fear of Catholicism which led two years later to the defeat of Al Smith. The latter was a traumatic experience for Catholics who again kept a low profile and made their religion private.

During the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Catholics again established liaison with government officials. The way for this had been partially paved by the issuing in 1919 of the Bishops' Program for Social Reconstruction, drafted by Father John A. Ryan of the Catholic University of America. It proposed, among other things, a just wage and government regulation of industry and even, if anti-monopoly laws failed, government competition with private industry. It was branded by the National Association of Manufacturers as "partisan, pro-labor union, socialistic propaganda." It also prepared the groundwork for later Catholic support of the New Deal. Roosevelt consciously wooed Catholic leaders both in this country and in Rome. He considered Cardinal Mundelein a friend and accepted at least the influence of Francis Spellman, auxiliary bishop of Boston and later archbishop of New York. He also met with Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, the papal secretary of state, who was elected Pope Pius XII in 1939.

But alliance between Catholics and liberals on domestic issues began to founder on foreign affairs. Catholics as a group could not countenance the liberal support of the Spanish Republic which they saw strictly in terms of Communism. Irish-Americans were alienated by the failure of the liberals to place Northern Ireland on their agenda. World War II presented another opportunity for a display of Catholic loyalty to the American nation. The war effort overshadowed the strained relations between Catholics and other Americans.

At the end of the war, there was a new outburst of public reservation about the compatibility of Catholicism and American society. One sign of this was the renewed hostility to Myron Taylor's mission as the president's personal representative to the pope. Roosevelt's appointment of Taylor on Christmas Day 1939 had been greeted with the charge of a violation of the First Amendment, but opposition died out as the United States entered the war. On the recommendation of the State Department, Roosevelt had even approved the designation of Taylor's assistant, Harold H. Tittmann as *Chargé d'Affaires*. With other Allied diplomats, Tittmann took up residence in the Vatican. As the war was coming to an end, opposition again increased toward the Taylor mission and the State Department queried how Tittmann had been given an official diplomatic title. Taylor would continue in his post until 1950, but there were other areas of tension between Catholics and American society. The War Department denied that Roosevelt had the right to bind the government to any responsibility for war damages to papal territory outside the Vatican (the issue was the American bombing of Castel Gandolfo); and Paul Blanshard suggested that bishops be made subject to the Foreign Agents Registration Law since they received their appointments from the pope. Hostility toward the bishops increased in 1951 when Truman attempted to appoint General

Mark Clark as the American ambassador to the Holy See. With Spellman the sole exception I have found, the bishops actually opposed this appointment, but they were perceived by American society as attempting to gain a privileged position for the Catholic church in the United States.

POSTWAR ANTI-CATHOLICISM was gradually tempered by the new threat of Communism. One legacy of the Joseph McCarthy witch hunt was the conviction that, if nothing else, Catholics were not Communists. But if Catholics in the 1950s began to be perceived as good Americans, it was at best a new-found perception and one which might not last. While Cardinal Spellman became famous for his flag-waving patriotism and his support of the Vietnam war, it is no wonder that most bishops refrained from making public statements on issues which were not directly concerned with Catholic interests. "Private" religion—or the interpretation that the separation of church and state means a divorce between religious belief and public policy—became the order of the day. The bishops were intent on bridging the gap between their flocks and the American cultural majority.

Until now, the national pastorals have been concerned only with those public issues which directly or indirectly pertained to the family—the just wage, aid to parochial education, or opposition to abortion. Only rarely did they challenge either a law or the interpretation of the law by the courts. On one such occasion in 1948, the bishops did challenge the use by the Supreme Court of Jefferson's phrase, a "wall of separation" between church and state, in declaring unconstitutional released-time religious instruction in public schools. They had moved beyond the immediate issue of education to the broader issue of the role of religion in American life and the growth of secularism or privatization of religion. On this issue, incidentally, they faced misunderstanding from another quarter—the Vatican, which forbade formal cooperation between the Catholic church and other religious groups. A group of prominent Protestant leaders, expressing the same fear of secularism, had already challenged the basis of the court's decision, but the bishops had to content themselves with quoting the Protestant statement. Though this direct challenge to the Supreme Court had taken place in the context of an educational issue, the bishops had at least expressed their concern for American society. Yet they refrained from comment on other areas of government policy.

Many observers have seen the election of John F. Kennedy as the sign of the acceptance of Catholics as American. This is true only to a point, for it remained for Catholics and their leaders fully to exercise their rights as citizens. This would come only when Catholics felt comfortable enough in being American that they no longer felt it necessary to prove their patriotism by uncritically accepting the nation's foreign policies and by serving in the armed forces. If we are to be true to the British and American common law tradition, on which is premised the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, true patriotism might entail criticism of the government, which exists only to serve its citizens. Unlike their predecessors, the

present-day bishops are no longer afraid of being accused of being un-American if they challenge a government policy. In this, their recent pastoral is more significant than Kennedy's election, for Catholics are not only accepted as Americans but are also exercising their full rights as Americans.

There is one final observation to make on the current group of bishops. Most were elevated to the episcopacy after the cold war between Catholics and other Americans was ended. Most did not participate in the Second Vatican Council, but all were nurtured in that council's teaching that the church is immersed in the world and has a duty at times to criticize governments. Maturity as Americans and the intellectual and pastoral absorption of Vatican II, then, help explain why, on the one hand, the bishops were somewhat late on the scene and why, on the other, their action has provoked such a variety of public responses.

Perhaps their pastoral will not invoke any more obedience than the earlier encyclical against birth control, but they have at least raised the major question of the Christian attitude toward the arms race. They have declared that religion is not merely a private matter but must influence the way in which people regard the world in which they live. It is perfectly correct, as some commentators have noted, to remember that Catholics are no longer immigrants in need of a type of leadership to protect them against a frequently hostile environment. They are now fully Americans in need of moral challenge if they are to remain Catholic as well as American. The nuclear arms race is at least as important a moral question as going to see *Baby Doll* or *The Moon is Blue*.

Dance

DANCE TO THE MUSIC

BALANCHINE, 1904-1983

GEORGE BALANCHINE became the greatest force in twentieth century dance by establishing the "plotless" ballet. Before him choreographers developed ballets according to a story line; now they possess the imaginative freedom to order a ballet solely according to the framework of its accompanying score. Literary devices as a pretext for dancing have been superseded by the rhythmic structure of music as the governing frame for imaginative development.

Music and dance have far more in common than literature and dance, but until Balanchine turned his enormous gifts to demonstrating their direct relationship to one another, literature had brokered that alliance. Ballet, which had grown up as the stepchild of opera, now found itself confidently in possession of a movement vocabulary that is expressive in its own terms and without need of a narrative justification.

Born Georgi Melitonovitch Balanchivadze in St. Petersburg, Balanchine was a graduate of the Imperial School

for Theater and Ballet and a member of the Maryinsky Ballet. As part of a small group of artists called "Soviet State Dancers" he left Russia in 1924 and elected to remain in the West. He was engaged by Serge Diaghilev and appointed resident choreographer of the Ballets Russes de Serge Diaghilev, the most vital company of the time. By 1929 when Diaghilev died, Balanchine's name was known throughout Western Europe.

Opinions of his work ranged from outright disapproval to enthusiastic affirmation. Lincoln Kirstein, one of the most positive believers in its future, brought him to the United States in 1933 to found the School of American Ballet and the American Ballet. The former is now effectively our national conservatory for classic dance training, and after several false starts the latter became New York City Ballet, our leading company. Balanchine's artistic ideals have infused them both.

As a choreographer he has created a body of work unmatched in the history of ballet and as a teacher has enlarged the technical capacity of the contemporary dancer. While his ballets have clearly established his creative genius, the extent of his impact on traditional ballet training has been less often remarked upon. In both cases the impulse for change stemmed from Balanchine's profound musical sensitivity.

While still training in the Maryinsky School, he enrolled as a student of piano and composition, studies which he pursued concurrently for three years. Because of his skill he was frequently asked by fellow students to accompany them in their school recitals. During the first flush of the revolution, when the Imperial School was closed, he supported himself at times as an accompanist to silent movies and after graduation played frequently in the popular cabarets that sprang up.

His first choreographic efforts concentrated on duets for himself and fellow students, and subsequently a group called "The Young Ballet" was formed around him. Despite official disapproval their presentations attracted considerable attention; by the time he left Russia he had created nearly three dozen ballets or dance sequences in opera, theater, and cabaret. With Diaghilev's company he devised over thirty opera-ballets and nine ballets of which "Apollo" had the greatest significance for him. Impressed by the economy and logic of Stravinsky's score, Balanchine translated his perception into choreographic gesture. The ballet had no libretto so he was free to work directly with the musical structure. Later he dated this experience as the creative turning point in his life. Henceforth he worked in this manner.

Balanchine never attempted to render the music visual by assigning dancers the roles of being woodwinds, strings, or any other instrument. Instead he devised a structured theme in accordance with the rhythmic armature of the score. As he did so it became necessary to extend the training of the dancers so that they could more adequately respond to denser musical incidents. In conversation he pointed out that the Greek root of technique was *techne*, meaning art; and for him artistic expressiveness was inextricably linked with expanded technical ability. This necessitated increasing the ability of dancers to move within faster musical time.

To train dancers to meet these demands, he shifted the

weight from the heel to the ball of the foot and eliminated the preparatory stances assumed between combinations of steps so that the musical flow was not halted. He increased the points of contact between the male and female partners to provide variety and greater expressive possibilities. To add visual excitement to the *pas de deux*, he introduced the technique of "off-balance" partnering in which the female was allowed to swing out far beyond her natural balance point while being supported and then returned to secure placement. In all cases the innovations were made to better express the dynamics of the musical score which accompanied the ballet. These changes were incorporated in the training at the School of American Ballet, creating a newer, more fluent dancer, ready to meet the demands of the Balanchine repertory.

While vitally concerned with creative innovation, he was thoroughly imbued with the classic vocabulary even as he extended its technical and artistic range. Woman was the creative inspiration that infused his work. He celebrated his ideal woman as muse, companion, and sharer of life's joys and disappointments in a variety of ballets such as "Apollo," "Duo Concertant," "Serenade," "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2," and "La Sonambula." He was particularly fond of the waltz and created a variety of ballets exploring its possibilities as a sheer celebration of natural exuberance in *The Nutcracker's* "Waltz of the Snowflakes" and "Waltz of the Flowers." Poignant romantic interludes were delineated in "Valse Fantasie" and "Trois Valses Romantiques," while the waltz as a mirror of society found form in "Liebeslieder Walzer" and "Vienna Waltzes."

Though he preferred the shorter one-act ballet, he showed himself equally adept at creating full evening works of which he designed a half-dozen including *The Nutcracker*. Created in 1954, the latter's enduring popularity can be seen in the fact that next December New York City Ballet will present its one-thousandth performance of the Christmas classic.

His taste in music was broad, encompassing Bach, Beethoven and Brahms along with twentieth-century innovators Stravinsky, Schönberg, Webern, Ives, and Hindemith as well as popular composers like Cole Porter and John Philip Sousa. To each he brought creative understanding in devising ballets using their music. If his collaboration with Stravinsky — "Apollo," "Agon," "Stravinsky Violin Concerto," "Symphony in Three Movements" — was the closest, he created equally masterful works with the music of Bach ("Concerto Barocco"), Mozart ("Divertimento No. 15"), Glück ("Chaconne"), Tchaikovsky ("Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2" and "Serenade"), and Bizet ("Symphony in C").

During his career he devised over four-hundred works including film sequences and musicals as well as ballets. His revolutionary ballet "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" for Rodgers and Hart's *On Your Toes* in 1936 integrated dance into the plot line of the book, an innovation that became a creative necessity in subsequent decades. Between then and 1951, he contributed dance sequences to nineteen musicals and became the first choreographer to also direct a whole production in *Cabin in the Sky*.

The nineteenth century relegated the corps de ballet to a decorative frame around the principal dancers and Balanchine transformed it into a participating "character" in his ballets. The change reflected his own great skill at deploying large masses of dancers and the increased technical skill of the contemporary dancer. Because of his restless energy both as a choreographer and teacher, the present-day dancer wields the classic vocabulary with a greater speed and fluency than had ever been seen previously.

He was characteristically modest about his accomplishments, commenting that he liked to "move people to music." When asked about his work, he compared himself to a cook or a carpenter and echewed the word "create" in relation to his ballets. "Only God creates, I assemble."

DON McDONAGH

Screen

SPLIT DECISIONS GYPSIES & COPTERS

THE TITLE CHARACTER in *Angelo My Love*, which is Robert Duvall's first effort as a director, is a boy of ten or eleven who is a smooth talker, a sharp dresser, a great dancer, a sexy lover, and a gypsy, in that order. He moves through the city quickly, effortlessly, and is in control wherever he goes. As the film opens, he is scooting down some stairs into one of New York's hottest discos, where his virtuoso performance soon clears the floor of everyone except himself and the beautiful women twice his size and age who ring the periphery, waiting to dance with him. The next morning his mother drags him to school. There his teacher sympathetically but firmly demonstrates to him that he can't read. Angelo appears to squirm and sulk under this humiliation, as if for once he's met his match. But when his lack of cooperation finally gets him thrown out of school, he and his brother are exultant. The surly behavior was just a calculated ploy, another example of his ability to manipulate every situation.

School was too confining for him. Back on the street, this man-boy is in his element, in a larger public world where he can go from one exciting environment to another, mastering them all. He has as much presence at a gypsy trial in the back room of a bar as he has on the dance floor. His girlfriends are of every shape, shade, and description. One is a well-to-do WASP with whom he fights constantly and whom he stands up on her birthday. Another is a pubescent country-and-western singer into whose dressing room he barges in order to pick her up right in front of her mother. In the last scene of the film, Angelo is standing out on a sidewalk arguing with a fully-grown woman because she won't marry him.

Actually, this last scene isn't exactly in the film. It's part of a series of out-takes that are interspersed with the closing

credits. These clips thrown in at the end kept everyone at the theater in their seats until the house lights went up. The audience just couldn't get enough of Angelo. Neither could Robert Duvall, who re-created in this last scene the first one he ever saw Angelo play. Duvall was walking along Broadway one night several years ago, and he heard this imp of a boy berating a woman about marrying him. Duvall was hooked immediately. The whole project of the film began, like everything in Angelo's life, right there on the street.

Yet in a curious way Duvall's attention seems to wander in the film, a work ultimately more preoccupied with the gypsy world from which Angelo comes than with Angelo himself. The complicated plot revolves around the theft of a ring, a family heirloom that Angelo and his brothers are trying to recover. In the course of this story we meet other engaging characters besides Angelo, especially the thief and his wife, who are played by some gypsies Duvall got to know out in California. Clearly these people are not playing themselves, however, in the literal way that the street-wise kid Angelo is. Because they're not, the gypsy melodrama of thievery, deception, and ghosts in which they figure seems to me less compelling than Angelo himself does. Angelo gets a bit lost in the crush of adults and the shuffle of events. This is something that never happens to him on the dance floor.

Besides, it's far from clear to me how much being a gypsy has to do with Angelo's being Angelo. I know that Duvall would claim it has everything to do with it. Yet the extraordinary appeal that Angelo has for us is not, I don't think, as a gypsy. It is simply as a child who is so comfortable with having

grown up too fast. That's what all kids do today — grow up too fast — and Angelo is attractive because he allays some of our fears about this fact. It may be that he is able to give brashness and precocity so much charm because he's a gypsy. But it is not the reasons he is as he is that absorb us; it is simply the result.

Perhaps Duvall felt that by exploring more fully the gypsy world from which Angelo comes, he would discover the secret to Angelo's personality. If that is the film's intention, it fails. I never felt that I was seeing in Angelo's background the sources of his own largeness of character. On the contrary, the other men in the film, though wonderful, some of them, all seem far more limited. They are people who remain restricted to the gypsy world in a way that Angelo does not. By diverting his movie to the bigger subject of that world, Duvall has in some ways made it too small to contain its central character.

BLUE THUNDER is also a movie that's trying to go in two different directions at once. In this case no one should mind, though, since neither of them is the right direction. What does it matter whether a bad movie is bad in only one way, or in several? The basic story here is just another thriller. This time it's about police helicopter patrols and the men who fly them. Murphy (Roy Scheider) is the ace copter jockey on the L.A. force, so he's the one who is asked to test a new prototype for the feds and the military. This movie is heavily into the tech side of helicopters. When I arrived at the preview, I was given a glossy color handout with isometric illustrations of how all the gadgetry in the movie works. (This little promo-

Hillel Schwartz

Why After All Octave Chanute Encouraged the Two Brothers

So Flight began with the end of Fall
& a City-of-gold. December: Orville
a hundred feet up Kill Devil Hill
& twelve seconds later down by Will.
It's better somehow than bicycles,
better than dull balloons. The two men yell
and fly again against the shrill
of Kitty Hawk wind, but it's all
God's doing, isn't it? The evangelical
United Brethren & their episcopal
father: to fly you first must kneel
then lie until at last you feel
the lift. This their father tells Will,
Beloved-stronghold, who by sunfall
has flown to beat the devil
nearly a minute. Orville's
thirty-two, precisely the pull
of the earth, & responsible
for the ailerons. Will's

older, once a printer, still
public. They are both single,
neither smokes nor chews nor swills.

Only the good can fly; the evil
burn up. If it was not parable
in 1903, if names were not milled
to fit the lesson, straight as maple
off the saw, then whence these men of Middle
West come flying off Kill Devil Hill
at the leap of the century? Hell,
it was foreordained: from wind tunnel
to sandspit, from Ohio chill
to Atlantic swell, they were called
to fly. Mother mathematical,
father inspired, sons with skill
and faith.

And now some seven miles
up half across the Atlantic, I shall
lay me down to sleep. I'm not hysterical.
If the good Lord had not meant us all
to fly, he'd never have named that hill
Kill Devil or that family Wright or Orville
Orville or Wilbur Will.

tion alone probably cost half the budget for *Angelo My Love*.) For those of you who didn't get the handout, the movie itself also contains numerous demo scenes, including one where the helicopter virtually detroys a Nevada ghost town while a grandstand full of spectators looks on admiringly. You might say that the whole movie is nothing but grandstanding, a kind of flying circus that has only one act in it.

But director John Badham and the other people who made this movie are not willing to leave it at that. They feel the need to say more — about politics, the Vietnam war, human nature, and whatever else they can think of to throw in. At the same time that they love showing off their super copter and all its razzle-dazzle fire power, they also want to play upon feelings

that such a machine is evil. To this end, scriptwriters Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby have created a nemesis for Murphy in the person of Cochrane (Malcolm McDowell) who comes back into Murphy's life like the pain in an old war wound, and who is in cahoots with the CIA, the FBI and the other forces of evil in this movie. Between its indulgence in dare-devil copter stunts and its political pieties, *Blue Thunder* is trying to play both ends against the middle. It's trying to be both a mindless entertainment and something to think about, a low-brow movie for the masses and a high-brow movie for liberals. What comes of such efforts is middle-brow drivel, a movie that manages to be totally self-defeating.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

THE POWER OF RELIGION VERSUS HOLLYWOOD HOLINESS

Gandhi & 'Gandhi'

IVAN STRENSKI

"E.T. FOR Adults"? or "The Film-Event of the Year"? "Motion Picture of a Lifetime"? or "Jesus Movie"? Sometimes *Gandhi* the movie seems to sail along on the tradewinds of triumphant acclaim (not to mention its own self-generated promotional flatulence) only to get buffeted by unfriendly storms stirred up in the columns of *Commentary* or the *New Republic*. As in many other things, time may tell and pass the final verdict on this film. But in the meanwhile, the religious depths, or lack thereof, in *Gandhi* seem to have escaped most reviewers. This surprises me little, since religion is something we are almost duty-bound *not* to understand these days. And, if we consider it at all, we consign it to some nether world, far out of sight of the "real" worlds of economics or politics. But like it or not, religion is at the center of the identity of Gandhi himself, and our ignorance of Gandhi's religious identity very much at the center of the storm raging about this film.

For the record, I want to be clear in my admiration for the way Ben Kingsley enlarges our image of what a saint might be. Who will forget the Kingsley-Gandhi

sturdiness and sheer power of will? And how he walked? Big, strong, smashing strides. What a marvel, moreover, Gandhi's manifest sexiness — holy trickster rolling those big brown eyes, flexing the muscles of his well-defined brown back. In the Kingsley-Gandhi *satyagraha*, soul-force is made palpable flesh. And quite frankly, I do not care much how well this may replicate the Gandhi of history, or how it may have banished down the memory hole our 1940's newsreel world of Gandhi as wimp-in-a-diaper, the concave human insect. These are worlds well lost.

Yet enlightening as all this may be, the film is burdened with clichés that seem to blot out much of the light it brings. Heaviest of all are the clichés weighing on Gandhi's sanctity. In Attenborough's hands, Gandhi's sanctity is transformed into magic. Materializing E.T.-like from some outer space in the first-class compartment of a train chugging across South Africa, Gandhi sets out on a magical mystery *tour de soul force*, wonder-working his way across the screen between bouts of self-inflicted under-eating. Out of his turban come Jesus-stunts of various sizes and shapes. Remember *The Robe* or *The Greatest Story Ever Told*? Scene: Wedding Feast of Cana. No more wine. Enter Jesus. Poof! Water into wine. Now *Gandhi*. Scene: Racist South Africa, or the British Raj.

Enter Gandhi. A demo here, a strike there, and poof! Racist South Africa turns tail. An afternoon of nonviolent resistance-cum-head-bashing, and poof! The British Raj evaporates. But, note as well: poof! An E.T.-for-adults-cum-Jesus movie.

Now what's so wrong with the magical mysterious Gandhi (or Jesus)? Bred of our own movie-house Saturday afternoons with other magicians like Saints Charlton Heston or Victor Mature, we simply perpetuate Hollywood holiness and project it onto the rest of the history of religions. And whatever Hollywood may know, it does not know what saints are. When it tries to tell about saints, Hollywood inevitably tells us they are magicians. This is easily understood, since to portray Gandhi or Jesus as magicians is to say that they do things in ways *they* cannot understand. Poof! It's magic, and wow! "That's incredible!!"

But the schlock sentimentality of golly and wow tell us nothing about the guts of that "Great Soul," nothing about where even the real magic of sanctity originates, because they *know* nothing about the guts of sanctity itself — and certainly nothing about sanctity in traditional India. Thus, Attenborough's magic can only trap the pious and credulous in smogs of unknowing. Gandhi's magic was light thrown off by a fire of sanctity burning within, fueled by sources un-

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3 June 1983: 341

known even to E.T. But all Attenborough can (or is willing to) do is leave us wondering how so many bad things could go “poof!” so easily. Maybe Attenborough was only blinded by Gandhi’s light, or simply afraid to get burnt by the fire? I do not claim to know. But I do claim we can go past “poof!” and Gandhi as magician. But to do that we will have to learn what makes Gandhi such a luminous character. We will have to understand what kind of saint he was.

NOW I CONFESS I may be using Kingsley-Attenborough as convenient targets. They didn’t *invent* the conventions of magic and schlock spirituality attached to saints. Modern culture did. They are no *more* guilty of failing to penetrate the inner nature of Gandhi’s religious self-conception than any ordinary one of us is. They just broadcast it, and make it look worse even than it has a right to be.

The ideal of the saint — and a Hindu one at that — has perhaps never been more generally incomprehensible than it is today. Take his adoption of the traditional Indian garb and manner of a “renouncer.” What was all that about? Why did Gandhi need to shave his head, abandon sex, adopt a life of poverty in order to get the British to quit India? Why, indeed, as the film makes admirably clear, does Gandhi need to *learn* about traditional India by a deliberate process of self-education? And, *what* did he learn? All these things are essential to understanding Gandhi as a “saint,” yet are absent from a film freighted with the magic and sentimentality of Hollywood holiness.

So what was Gandhi doing anyway? And what has this to do with the idea of a (Hindu) saint? I do not think this extraordinary man can be understood unless we realize that Gandhi was deliberately trying to do two seemingly contrary things: he was trying to co-opt the ‘magic’ of the traditional holy man of India — the “renouncer” — while infusing it with some of the “magic” (and science) of the modern West. I will go out on a limb here and say that Gandhi was as successful as he was precisely because the traditional Indian ideal of the renouncer is not all

that different from the Western ideal of the perfect man — the individual. In India the renouncer has always been the major source of cultural change; he has led the major traditional movements *against* caste there; he stands for innovation against the tradition. Typically he goes his own way, becomes a kind of law unto himself. Typically he is deeply introspective and disciplined, which in India takes the form of otherworldly and mystical orientations. In the West (at its best), the individual has also been less Ayn Rand’s transcendental narcissist than reformer, revolutionary, and renewer of traditions. Our model of the sturdy, free-thinking, conscience-guided, self-reliant individualist shows much of the discipline of the Yogi, even if it is directed at life *in this world*.

One of the ironies of cultural contact is that traditional Indians early on recognized this isomorphy: westerners were admired (beef-eating and pleasure-maximizing aside) precisely for the same reasons Indians admired their own renouncer individualists. Those India Civil Service elites seemed real supermen, able to go on without visible social nurture, yet bound by service and duty to some (for them) lofty cause. Like traditional Hindu renouncers, they represented stunning achievements of personal power all the more remarkable to a people swaddled in snug supporting social networks we can scarcely imagine or even comprehend. Both the British elites and the traditional renouncers got respect because they made a show of being superhuman individualists.

And the resemblances go deeper. We all know how “inhuman” the image of the rugged individualist can often be — they are impervious to social pressures,

hardened by the discipline of their self-inflicted regimens of work and duty, and so on. Well, much the same can be said of Gandhi. Indeed, George Orwell developed this theme at length in his marvelous essay on Gandhi in 1949. The saints, says Orwell, are inhuman. They have chosen God; “we” have chosen man.

Much the same can be said of those who choose duty, the job, the movement or whatever as their “god”; they, too, become inhuman — at least because such consuming devotions demand a withdrawal from the warmth and leisure we naturally associate with ordinary human life. Revolutionaries and captains of industry both make notoriously bad fathers or mates because they are consumed by tasks which simply leave little time for the pleasures of humanity. So it is no surprise when we see that Gandhi puts aside more than meat, alcohol, and tobacco when he assumes the traditional Indian renouncer’s role: he renounces sex, as we all know, but also love and friendship. Those of us in the West whose minds and hearts have been warmed by the thought of the compassionate Buddha might well compare the harder advice this traditional Indian renouncer gave to those, like Gandhi, who would follow the renouncer’s path. There the Buddha likens love and friendship to “hooks in the throat” and urges us to “walk lonely like the rhinoceros.”

Gandhi knows these words in ways many of us will find chilling after the human portrayal Kingsley gave us; yet they are the background of Gandhi’s renunciation of sex, love, and friendship alike. Hard pills to swallow. But swallow them we must if we would understand the inner side of this “great soul.” In India, the cult of the renouncer thrives much like our cult of success, the hero, or even the outlaw. At opposite ends of the globe, the same weird fascination is to be found: ordinary people are drawn by those who dare to be everything we are not.

GANDHI WAS, however, virtually unique among previous renouncers of traditional India: he was an individual in *both* traditional Indian *and* Western



Kingsley and Attenborough on set.

senses. He was both tonsured ascetic and barrister — both in search of personal salvation and champion of the rights of the individual.

It is worth remembering how true the film is here to Gandhi's ignorance of traditional India — midway through life he admitted to a "nodding acquaintance with Hinduism." On his return from South Africa, he literally needs to become acquainted with India. For by the time we meet him in the film, Gandhi is already a very strange mix of Hindu and, yes, Christian. He comes first to Hindu scripture through Victorian English translations; his non-violence and civil disobedience spring as much from Tolstoy, Thoreau, and the Sermon on the Mount, as they do from any recollection of traditional Hindu piety; his worldly asceticism is more Calvinism-cum-the-Social-Gospel than it is the message of the *Bhagavad Gita*; his universal, humanistic morality and egalitarianism is certainly much more Victorian Christian liberalism than the particularist, caste-

dominated Hindu dharma; his preoccupation with hygiene only *looks* like fastidious Hindu ritual purity — Ganges water notoriously does not "clean": it "purifies," it sanctifies.

Gandhi's genius does more than replicate either the ideal of Western individualism or Hindu renunciation: he fuses the two. He infuses ancient Indian sanctity with the Western belief in the sanctity of the individual. He dresses our sacred norm of the equality of all humans in homespun Hindu myth — untouchables are our "equals"; they are "Harijans" — literally children of God.

So Gandhi succeeded as much as he did *because* he dared to "confuse" East and West, religion and politics. In this sense he was no more "confused" than the India of his day — and ours. It is easy to imagine India a "lost world" of archaic-exotic culture, but it is not. Gandhi's deliberate "confusion" of traditional religion and modern politics only repeats on another level the kinds of "confusions" the British Raj had already

achieved. Gandhi's India (and ours) was already in the throes of syncretistic change — political, economic, or linguistic. Whether this is finally good or not, India's history may or may not show. Gandhi's remarkable influence certainly did show how traditional forms of spirituality fused with modern strategies and instruments of politics can shake the foundations of empire. One would have thought that even our American penchant for learning slowly the lessons of Third World relations and forgetting them with equal speed would have been shaken by such fiascos as the Iran mess. But with our boys home from the embassy in Teheran, we are back staring at our navels again. Shah? Ayatollah? Wasn't that the sixties? No, it wasn't. And what both Gandhi and the Ayatollah would teach us, who smugly think the world runs on economics and politics alone, is that religion can still stir political movements of great strength and influence. Gandhi thought this might be so; the movie *Gandhi* hadn't a clue.

Books: A PROCESSION OF POPES

"WHEN I'm good, I'm very good, but when I'm bad I'm better" — thus spake the quippable Mae West in one of her more memorable dicta. Such a sentiment comes almost invariably to mind when one reads the long history of the popes. Alongside all the holiness, virtue, brilliance, and selfless service that has often been resident in the pontiffs, there have also been the horrors, degradations, and venalities that make for the sort of badness that is better in making history books popular.

The corruption of the best is the worst. Some of the occupants of Catholic Christianity's highest corporate office seem to have made it their studied intention to prove the validity of that point. Certainly all of the shadow side of things papal is here in veteran diplomat Nicolas Cheetham's new history of the popes, *Keeper of the Keys*.

Pope Vigilius of the mid-sixth century appears, caught in a brawl in a church,

KEEPER OF THE KEYS

A HISTORY OF THE POPES FROM ST. PETER TO JOHN PAUL II

Nicolas Cheetham

Scribner's, \$19.95, 340 pp.

Clyde F. Crews

clinging to the altar which collapses in the melee. And Stephen VI (896-97) exhuming the corpse of his predecessor Formosus to put it on trial; as part of its sentence the two blessing fingers are severed and the body thrown into the Tiber. Shortly thereafter Stephen himself was strangled to death. Or we find Renaissance Pope Paul II (1464-1471) "dying from a stroke brought on by a surfeit of melons."

Suffice it to say, Cheetham has written a readable and careful accounting of the papal saga. He is aware of the evolution of the papal office from a beginning of modest leadership into what often be-

came an empire of domination, and he treats that rise gingerly. The reportage is scrupulously fair. If it is tendentious, it tilts in the direction of making allowances for the popes, invoking their historical gestalts, settling for milder judgments when harsher ones might make for a better press.

The text is a popular, introductory type of writing without critical apparatus (save for a short bibliographical essay) and is based to all appearances on secondary sources. Given the number of such books available, it would seem appropriate to indicate the distinctiveness of yet another of the species appearing, but this is not touched on in the text. Even so, Cheetham approaches his task with clarity and occasionally with elan.

There are landmark characters in papal chronicles, of course, to which one instinctively turns to gauge a production. Here is Cheetham on Boniface VIII (1294-1303): "He was a political ex-

While he was celebrating midnight Mass in Santa Maria Maggiore on Christmas Eve, armed men rushed into the church and snatched [Gregory VII] from the altar. . . . Slightly wounded, Gregory was held prisoner in a fortified tower . . . [which] was besieged by infuriated crowds seeking his release. This was speedily obtained; moreover he kept his promise that his captor would come to no harm. When the incident was over he calmly resumed his Mass at the point where it had been broken off.

—Nicolas Cheetham
Keeper of the Keys

tremist, pathologically power-conscious and impelled into dramatic confrontations by his imperious pugnacity and arrogant confidence." And of Nicholas V (1447-1455) we read: "He was a small ugly man . . . and as Aeneas Sylvius used to say, what he did not know was outside the scope of human knowledge."

Ranke had listed Clement VI (1523-34) among the most disastrous of all the popes. Cheetham is more inclined to blame inherited evils. His last word on this Medici is that "he was quite unequal to the task of healing the new division in Christendom." If this seems too mild, though, Cheetham is quite capable of calling Paul IV (1555-1559) what he was: a "harsh bigot" of "pathological tendency."

Coming to more recent times, the narrator finds a favorite in Benedict XIV (1740-58). Macaulay had termed Ben-

edict the best and wisest of the popes, and it is nearly impossible not to fall under the man's spell. In many ways he prefigured good Pope John XXIII whom, not surprisingly, Cheetham also deeply revered. All the modern popes, beginning with Pius XI, are seen by Cheetham as in some ways forerunners of conciliar renewal in Catholicism. His account of Pius XII in short compass recounts both sides in the disputes concerning the papal policy toward the Nazi holocaust. The presentation of John Paul II comes down to that May day in 1981 when he was shot.

Here come the quibbles. The photographs. There are about fifty of them, some quite striking. With such obvious limitations of visual space, why are we rendered *three* pictures each of Gregory the Great, Gregory VII, and John Paul II? Was Paul VI really stabbed while in the Philippines or was he untouched as the *New York Times* (Nov. 27 1970) reported? The *Wall Street Journal* (March 30, 1967) in challenging *Populorum Progressio* spoke of "warmed over Marxism;" not "souped up Marxism." In the bibliography, one misses some of the better recent materials on the modern papacy; Aubert's *Church in a Secularised Society* and Holmes's *Papacy in the Modern World*.

Perhaps no better source exists in Western history for a study of the intricacies of human character—in its deficiencies and its splendor—than in the lives of the popes. *Keeper of the Keys* provides a kind of Grey Line tour of such intricacies, pointing out landmarks, leaving the traveler looking for more.

is true of sex is anybody's guess. It is true of anthropology, probably, because folks quickly recognize in other folks something common and sacred. (The Dominican nuns who taught me in grade school used to call this thing "the soul.") Folks know that they can systematically study intramolecular vibrational redistribution, Alexandrian Christology, febronianism and bat feces, but to study other folks is at least to imply that the soul is appropriately introduced into an ordinary scale of values. Before the Gypsies were added to the Holocaust, they were protected by a Reich Department of Historical Monuments, which wanted to study their race and culture as medieval curios. Could the requisite dehumanization of these people have begun in the act of scholarship?

Whatever else may be said of Henry Glassie's exhaustive and enigmatic account of the goings on in a five-mile swath of rural Fermanagh, seven miles north of the border which divides Ireland, it is so reverent in its conception and approach, so sensitive to the situations of its characters, and so thorough in its depiction of their complexity and mystery, one assumes it could not be the work of an unkind man practicing an ominous craft. This scholarship is almost holy.

Glassie wanted to observe people "as they are: free and stuck in the world." He wanted to see people thus situated surviving "despite boredom and terror," and so chose Northern Ireland. He chose Ballymenone, "a small place of green hills, white homes and brown bog" because, he says, "it pleased me." That's admirable method.

Ballymenone is not really a town or a village, and when Glassie arrived there in 1972, he stood on a lane surrounded by a physical landscape which offered little or no tangible evidence of human community. He was unhurried (and his study required seven years), assuming that encounters with one person at a time would eventually yield a vision of communal structure. His assumption proved correct, and in his description of his first experiment, there is enough poetry and magic to pack a couple of generations worth of social science graduate schools:

To my left, a low ridge ascended.

Honorable, almost holy, scholarship

PASSING THE TIME IN BALLYMENONE

Henry Glassie

Univ. of Pennsylvania, \$29.95, 852 pp.

Michael Garvey

SEAN O'FAOLAIN, having studied his people and himself, concluded that "we will have to agree that too many strains and influences have been woven

into the tapestry of the Irish mind for anybody to disentangle them all." Whenever folks generalize about folks, a telltale apology like O'Faolain's can be found conveniently close to the scene of the generalizing.

Anthropology, like sex, is one of those inevitable, necessary, and engaging things about which we feel (and know we *should* feel) guilty from the outset; even before anything has happened. Why this

Above it poked the gable of a house. Light smoke played from its roof, and I forced myself through the first opening in the hedge, reclosing it with a dead branch, slipped up a wet field, scattering its cows, fumbled along the next hedge, scratched through, stumbled into a drain, mucked my way up another field, skirting its bull, tore through more thorn, and stood finally atop the hill in front of the house. In front of it too stood a compact, handsome man in a black suit holding a rosary in both hands before his breast. He said I looked tired and invited me in, quietly introducing himself and the small man who sat in a big chair by the fire. They were two old brothers, he said, who lived on their lone.

Years later, when, as Glassie writes "we had ceased mistaking each other for representatives of different nationalities," Peter Flanagan, the man with the rosary, would admit that Glassie had frightened them. They made awkward small talk and agreed to meet again in a few days to record some of Mr. Flanagan's fiddle music and to have a few drinks.

In this way, Glassie rediscovers a remarkable community in which the oral tradition is as indispensable to survival as the hay it saves and the turf it clamps. During the day in Ballymenone they (about 130 people) pass the time at work, getting hay and peat, and growing potatoes, onions, rhubarb, garlic, broad-beans, turnips, beetroot, carrots, and cabbage. On Sunday nights, when the pubs on their side of the border are closed, they go South to Swanlinbar, or "Swad," to drink and sing. On other nights, they gather together in their kitchens at "ceilis" and talk.

Everything in "the District" or "the locality," as Ballymenone's people call their part of the world, is described and even catalogued here: 42 households, 33 Catholic and 9 Protestant, four out of ten managed by unmarried people; the implements with which the inhabitants farm; the way they thatch their roofs; the way they decorate their kitchens; the positioning of their houses; the layout of their lands. The book's nearly thousand

pages are liberally sprinkled with beautiful photographs of people, dwellings, and artifacts, and Glassie's descriptions are ample and precise without being clinical and dead. Having gone through one fine chapter entitled "Home," I've found it impossible to take our northern Indiana kitchen for granted any longer.

But the book's greatest value and the most honorable aspect of Glassie's scholarship is the reproduction of Ballymenone's talk. There is not space here to offer a fair sample of Hugh Nolan's three-and-a-half-page story about the Great Famine of the mid-nineteenth century, but it is a masterpiece of narrative connecting our own time with the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland while describing a fearfully recent catastrophe to explain a rabidly politicized present. Nolan, a prominent local storyteller, apologizes in mid-course without breaking the spell:

So now, if you were talkin to a more intelligent person than me, people that had read more, they could tell ye more about it, but

that's a rough outline of it.

The cause of the Famine was: the failure of the potato crop. And then there was no foreign stuff comin in, do you see. And then: death and misery.

The Famine, to Nolan's listeners becomes a familiar and urgent thing, a way, at least, to understand the violence which, in Northern Ireland, is never far enough away. The stories of Ballymenone serve many other purposes as well, of course, but they always involve a sort of illumination, an assertion that darkness will not, after all, engulf those who sit around the hearth to warm themselves, to listen and to speak. "The tongue," says Peter Flanagan, "is the worst instrument attached to the human being. It's the most destructful of the soul." In Ballymenone they know how words can become murder, but they also need them to rise above the fear and necessity and blood and dung of their lives. They need them for the high art of "entertainment." Flanagan says, "that's the thing. When the mouth's

"All my life I wanted to be a priest, but I postponed it. Then I thought I was too old, but now, I am anxious to go back to Puerto Rico and tell everyone about Sacred Heart. There are so many good men there and just like me, they think it's too late. I want to tell them it isn't."

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Santiago Rivera
Class of '82

open, you must give it a wee consideration what you're sayin. And if it's beneficial in any way or respect—that's great. Entertainment's the greatest thing."

The people of Ballymenone watched Glassie construct his description of themselves, and his work has almost certainly figured prominently in the talk of recent ceilis. He set out "to create an ethnography strong enough to cause disquiet in my own world, but gentle enough to cause no discomfort among the people I wrote about."

In his generosity, Glassie has presented a people too noble and durable for us to imagine how a mere scholarly book could discomfort them. But it should disquiet our own community, which is as precarious as any in Fermanagh. Violence is never far away from where we are. But a scientific enterprise in which compassion and accuracy so complement each other is as unsettling a thing as a liturgical event should be, because it invites us to consider humanity the way Chesterton's St. Francis does, "a mob of kings." We could use disquiet like that.

God and Human Freedom

A Festschrift in honor of
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The surface of change

CROSS SECTIONS

FROM A DECADE OF CHANGE

Elizabeth Janeway

Morrow, \$14.95, 320 pp.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

ELIZABETH JANEWAY's new book is aptly sub-titled "from a decade of change." The term "change" recurs again and again in this collection of essays and occasional pieces. Janeway speaks of recognizing the need for change, responding to change, realizing that something must change, even managing change. She evaluates individuals, groups, movements, even economic processes with reference to how they locate themselves, or can be located, on the change continuum. For Janeway, 'change' becomes a somewhat magical invocation and gets presented as a nearly unalloyed good. Hence we find pioneers and rebels, fighting for change, at odds with reactionaries and the passive who either fight change or are indifferent to it. The Janeway scenario isn't quite this tidy but her reflections and arguments tend towards such a bifurcation.

The problem, of course, is that 'change' settles nothing as an evaluative term. The term lacks substantive criteria whereby we might assess the force and trajectory of change: to what ends and in the name of what principles? What role does individual action and agency have in this change or that or are we primarily reacting to forces outside our control? We Americans have been high on change; change is what we are all about. Other societies stay stuck in the cake of custom. Buoyant and optimistic, we Americans embraced a teleology of progress and saw unending change as the single constant in our world.

At fleeting moments Janeway acknowledges irritants in her image of change, when she recognizes that change is not a one-way street towards unambivalent gain. For example, in her essay "The Women's Movement," she observes that the breakdown of ties of kinship, region, and community comprise a

loss. Finally, however, the great gains in individual autonomy, achievement and free choice — especially for women — outweigh the worlds we have lost. A few pages later she notes that such recent phenomena as cults and the Moral Majority "speak of an inarticulate need for change." But surely this off-handed comment is too simple. If Janeway had gone on to probe the meaning of these outbursts of coerced or narrowly defined *gemeinschaft*, she would find a reaction to change, to the losses she herself mentions in passing. Cults and Moral Majoritarians signify, in however distorted a form, that perhaps we should re-think the fragmentation of the present moment, determining how we might reconnect people to familial and community ties without smothering the individual in the process.

Too often Janeway skims the surface of complex events and ideas, sliding over or past the tough questions and dilemmas. Her surface is smooth, paved with clear prose, and sometimes lively. Janeway is most persuasive when she is least self-consciously theoretical and her observations flow from a rich confluence of personal experience and historic events. She is also strong in her section on "Literature." The long essay, "Women's Literature," is loving and solid. Janeway here shows great range. Though the essay is bland from time to time, lacking critical bite, it is an enormously helpful survey of a varied, rich scene.

Finally, the book fails to satisfy overall. Janeway doesn't give the reader many meaty bones to chew on. One is disappointed because Janeway is an intelligent observer. Perhaps because she wants to embrace "the woman's movement" in its totality, not to highlight the many differences or explain sometimes bitter disputes, she veers off into a matter-of-factness that gives us no way to think through genuine political and theoretical dilemmas. For example Janeway repeats the truism, challenged and, to my mind, disproved by political and social researchers, that the ERA was defeated when men came to recognize its

significance. In her scheme of things, men are defenders of "The Thing." By "The Thing" Janeway means political sham, greed, and bureaucratic rigidity, though she also uses it as a kind of shorthand for male chauvinism. So "The Thing" wiped out the ERA.

But this evades and falsifies recent history. Why have more men than women, from the beginning of polling data, favored ERA? How does one account for the widespread, grass-roots effort on the part of thousands of women to defeat ERA? Why do many legislators claim that they were so heavily lobbied by women in their constituencies against ERA that they changed their votes? The point here is that the ERA struggle was not a simple case of men vs. women but, importantly, a struggle *between* groups of women representing diverse social locations, self-understandings, and relationships towards the 'change' Janeway celebrates. Unless she chooses to see in anti-ERA women simply female clones of The Thing, she must think more sympathetically than she has about the fears and beliefs that animated their efforts.

One additional example of drawing a too-easy conclusion on the basis of unexamined evidence. Janeway criticizes a woman who said to her: "I don't want equality. I want to be taken care of." For Janeway, this woman "didn't know what she was talking about, which she can't be blamed for. But she sounded proud of her ignorance." If one reflects on this brief vignette of an encounter between woman and woman, the following thoughts suggest themselves. Perhaps the woman who wanted to be cared for was speaking of a yearning for human interdependence, of a kind of caring nexus she saw as incompatible with "equality" defined as taking her place in the male world of competition and achievement. Perhaps. The point is Janeway might have responded more sympathetically if she were not so convinced that women's central task, at present is to get in on the public world, to achieve, to prove themselves and yet, *at the same time*, to refuse cooptation by the existing system. This is an enormous leap of faith even within the terms of

Janeway's own insistent recognition of how powerfully defined we are by the social locations in which we find ourselves.

Even as I honor Janeway's personal quest for a world of action and achievement and her support of women's studies and feminist politics, I find her political

and theoretical analysis of the present moment and past decade conceptually impoverished. We need categories and approaches that allow us to probe and re-cognize in ways that challenge our own understandings and put pressure on our commitments as well as those of others.

The new battleground of regulation

REVOLT AGAINST REGULATION

THE RISE AND PAUSE OF THE CONSUMER MOVEMENT

Michael Pertschuk
Univ. of California, \$12.95, 192 pp.

James McKenna

ASSUME that in a democracy, vigorous debate is the food of health. Then, with today's endless elections and furious congressional sessions, you might think that the body politic is ruddy and rotund. It is fed a steady diet of thirty-second political themes, beefy opinion surveys, small and large PAC contribu-

tions, symbols of every variety and form.

But of course our democracy sometimes seems ill and ineffective, bloated in a way a poor person might be who can afford to eat only starches. We are hungry for serious, substantive ideas.

Michael Pertschuk's, *Revolt Against Regulation* explains why this has come to pass and suggests a currently unpopular solution: renewed reliance on regulation by government.

Pertschuk is the former chairman of the Federal Trade Commission and still serves as a commissioner. For the past eighteen years he has participated in the many victories and, more recently, de-

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feats of the consumer movement. Pertschuk's memoir of these years is a fascinating, often humorous, and finally disturbing view of political debate in this country.

Perhaps the FTC's slide from prestige can be traced to the March 1, 1978 *Washington Post* editorial against the FTC's consideration of restraints on children's advertising. The *Post* charged that the FTC had become a "National Nanny" and that officious government was now usurping the traditional role of parents. The FTC's symbolic role as the honest cop, protector of the defenseless, was suddenly damaged.

The many business lobbies were quick to sense a new weapon and began to fight symbol with symbol. Rapidly, the FTC was painted as an expensive, wasteful meddler in fundamental institutions — the family and the free market. Increasingly, the rhetoric of deregulation and productivity began to drown out the consumer complaints. Congress voted itself the power to strike down proposed FTC regulations and decreased the FTC's annual appropriation.

The FTC is often portrayed today as retarding work-place productivity. Pertschuk's many fascinating vignettes challenge such an image. For example, what possible relation could a FTC rule requiring funeral directors to disclose the price of their lower priced funerals have on national productivity? Probably little

or none. But as a congressman explained to Pertschuk, funeral directors can "kill" you politically. Everybody in town knows them, they have the time to be active in community affairs, and they decide where you will sit at the steady stream of funerals a politician must attend. Pertschuk explains that if an FTC rule results in consumers ordering \$350 funerals instead of \$3,500 funeral packages, the political repercussions will be real.

Underlying Pertschuk's discussion of his many regulatory battles is his adoption of economist Charles E. Lindblom's theory that if citizens become confused over the conflicting claims of businesses and consumers, the position of business will win out. Why? Pertschuk allows John Kenneth Galbraith to explain it best: "It follows that the voice of economic advantage being louder regularly gets mistaken for the voice of the masses."

As an example, Pertschuk describes the Senate Commerce Committee hearings on cigarette advertising. At great expense, the Tobacco Institute had combed the scientific universe in order to present testimony by thirty-eight doctors and scientists that questioned whether the causal relationship between smoking and health had been proved. Yet the thousands of experts who believed otherwise were represented only by the spokesman for the American Cancer Society.

Pertschuk is not unrepentant. He regrets regulatory waste and excess. But the net effect of his study of the consumer movement is to emphasize the importance of efficient government regulation in a modern democracy. Congressmen feel they must respond to ever increasing numbers of special interest lobbies. Pertschuk believes legislative solutions to problems will typically be only symptomatic rather than systematic. The active voice of a regulatory agency such as the FTC can provide deliberative depth to today's political debates.

Pertschuk embraces Franklin Roosevelt's concept of regulatory agencies. They are "tribunes of the people," the opposing voices to "private greed." But he does so with a newly-appreciative eye to the economies of a relatively free market.

Quoting Baudelaire's contempt of the human degradation that can result from obsession with profits, Pertschuk stakes out the place of a modern civil servant: "Between the analytical niceties of the cost-benefit analysis and the moral outrage of Baudelaire lies the battleground of regulation."

Correspondence

(Continued from page 322)

eral background sessions two and three times weekly. Seven company-level meetings and dozens of subsidiary meetings were scheduled daily.

Your correspondent might have better transported *himself* to Pittsburgh to observe the process and the results: he talks of jobs lost and cost-of-living which will "almost certainly never be restored," statements which have no substance in fact. He makes no mention of the \$520 million negotiated by the union *from the companies* which will help laid-off steelworkers.

FATHER CLYDE F. CREWS *chairs the department of theology at Bellarmine College.*

MICHAEL GARVEY *wrote State o' Chassis: An Earful of Ireland (Thomas More Press).*

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN's *most recent book is Public Man, Private Woman (Princeton).*

JAMES McKENNA *is Assistant Attorney General in the Consumer and Antitrust Division of the state of Maine.*

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The realities are that steel is not a growth industry, and the union which in thirty years made American steelworkers the highest paid industrial workers in the world is seeking to save as many of those jobs as is possible. Until the system changes, there is no way to force a corporation to keep plants open. To "redirect corporate investment" means a public policy change, and the Steelworkers have been in the forefront of this very issue for the past decade.

RUSSELL W. GIBBONS
Communications Director
United Steelworkers of America

Pluralism & democracy

St. Louis, Mo.

To the Editors: The three articles grouped under "Perspectives on Nicaragua" [April 22] generally provided in their totality informed criticism and deserved praise. However, the social democratic biases of Articles I and II are evident in the analyses.

Deborah Meier and Rafael PiRoman (I) are more preoccupied with the formal trappings of pluralism than with the participatory requirements of democracy. Referring to the Sandinista movement or regime as a "party" seems to me to be premature; but more surprising is that they should feel "relieved" to hear a Sandinista leader speculate that the Mexican single-party outcome is more likely than the Cuban one. The Cuban political system falls well short of democratic, socialist ideals, but it remains one that orients the economic and social development of the country to the interests of the people. Were its politics best characterized by Meier's description of a "small party speaking in the name of 'the people'," the Cuban regime would have collapsed years ago.

While PiRoman is more tolerant of other democratic traditions, I note that his notion of "responsible" democratic government includes faithful repayment of an international debt contracted by a dictatorship installed and maintained by the lenders. Now if PiRoman means that the Sandinistas are resisting what he identifies as "pressure from the bottom to be more radical economically" be-

cause they are facing the reality of international finance, this is one thing. But in this case "responsible" seems to mean respecting the interests of capital over the aspirations of a majority of the population — something, by the way, that a "small party speaking in the name of the 'people'" is particularly well suited to do.

I also prefer the relative tolerance of Mexico City to Havana when it comes to freedom of expression. But anyone who visits Havana and Mexico City will grasp in a moment the contrast between the desperate poverty of people living in the latter's slums and the austere but adequate standard of living to which every Cuban is entitled. As affluent intellectuals, we might express an individual preference for Mexico; but were we to find ourselves reincarnated thirty years hence as a Nicaraguan peasant or worker, we had better hope the Nicaraguan experience more closely approximates Cuba than Mexico.

In Meier and PiRoman's interview and in Cassidy's unabashedly critical article, *La Prensa* is described as an "independent" newspaper. But there is strong circumstantial evidence that the paper is being used by the United States as part of its extensively reported and documented campaign to destabilize the Sandinista government. Those who suspect the Sandinistas of crying "wolf" might read the U.S. Senate's investigation of how the "independent" *El Mercurio* was used to spread "disinformation" and to help bring down Chile's Allende in 1973. Saying *La Prensa* is "independent" is like saying that the Communist Party's *Daily Worker* is "independent."

I did find the information of the role of the *turbas* disturbing. The government's apparent attitude of benign neglect of extra-state violence cannot be acceptable to socialists and democrats. The articles are also to be complimented for the balanced discussion of the issue of elections, although I note that considerably less space was devoted to Van Pulley's statement of the Sandinista case than to the other two perspectives.

But Meier's complaint that "the general atmosphere blocks them (opponents) from putting forth their viewpoint more

widely and trying to persuade other people" probably applies as much to Western parliamentary democracies every bit as much as it does to Nicaragua. In fact, Cassidy's discussion of the range of political viewpoint among the Sandinistas and the loyal opposition suggests more divergent ideological pluralism in Nicaragua than in the United States.

Social democrats who take socialism seriously might contemplate the role of elections in our own society before insisting that Nicaragua hold them immediately. Without the right to elect those who run our banks, factories, colleges, corporations, etc., our national elections are rendered superficially democratic. If social democrats respond that calling for such elections in advanced capitalist society today would not correspond to our political culture, then perhaps they should also respect the secondary priority that the Sandinistas place on national elections while they build democracy in other sectors and levels of their society. I hope to see national elections soon in Nicaragua, but it is worth

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The Company at Kirkridge, a supportive network for contemporary Christians, will meet June 24,25,26, 1983 at Kirkridge, Bangor, PA. James Nelson, author of EMBODIMENT, will explore varying Christian understandings of sexual expressions in marriage and the meanings of fidelity, non-marital sex, homosexuality, masturbation, erotic literature, and sexuality in religious experience. Join us and become part of an ongoing group which is ecumenical in every dimension. For further information write Anthony Cicciariello, 520 West Gray St., Elmira, N.Y. 14905.

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recalling Garry Wills's observation that elections do not make a people free; free people make elections.

DANIEL HELLINGER

Assistant Prof. of Political Science
Webster University

Elites & revolution

Codden, III.

To the Editors: I read *Commonweal* because it is not just another liberal review of politics and the arts. But the editorial and articles on Central America [April 27] disappointed me.

If one wishes to discuss a "revolutionary" regime controlled by what Marx called "intellectuals," then some awareness of the problems outlined by Peter Berger (*Pyramids of Sacrifice*) would seem useful. The Sandinistas represent the latest version of an elite phenomenon which has existed at least as long as historical records have been kept.

And if one presumes to write favorably of those "in need," it would be fitting to first experience what Pietro Spina heard (in *Bread and Wine*, by Ignacio Silone) — a peasant actually expressing his view of the world about him. And Silone's novel strongly suggests the dimension which, I've always thought, was *Commonweal's* special claim to exist as a unique and identifiable voice in American journalism. But I don't see what distinguishes the lead editorial from something I can read in the *New York Times*.

The contemporary intellectual who wishes to say something about Central America might approach the task differently. He could begin by accompanying Berger to Cholula — it's not far from Mexico City. Then one should pray for the grace to hear a peasant speak — they have wondrous tales to reveal. Finally, there are the dead. The question to be asked is how not to dishonor them.

LEE HOINACKI

Church & Sandinistas

Antibes

To the Editors: There are certainly signs of controversy in Nicaragua between Archbishop Obando and the Sandinista government, but not between the Catholic church and the government — the

church is not the hierarchy.

Archbishop Obando played a courageous and honorable part during the civil war. A pastoral letter legitimized the Sandinista's revolt, and he helped in arranging the exchange of hostages and prisoners after the seizure of the National Palace in 1977. After the fall of Somoza the relations between him and the new government soured. Why?

One distinguished old monsignor to whom I spoke in Nicaragua believed the reason to be wounded vanity. The Archbishop was in the habit of appearing on television every Sunday celebrating the Mass. The government decided that the Mass should be celebrated on television in a different parish each Sunday — a decentralization of worship which the Archbishop refused to accept with the result that he lost his Sunday television audience.

One has the impression that he now takes any opportunity to embarrass the government of what is a very Catholic country. For example he did not discourage the "miracle of the Virgin of Cuapa," a very dubious event which became part of a Marian campaign launched with political motives and aided by the opposition paper *La Prensa*. The Virgin was a small statuette in the church of Cuapa which gave off drops of what was first called perspiration and then tears. The drops were gathered by pilgrims who placed cotton wool around the feet of the statuette. The tears were said to be for a sinful and revolutionary Nicaragua. One can imagine with what scepticism the Vatican would have treated a similar "miracle" in Italy, as they treated the "breathing" statue of the Virgin in Assisi in the fifties.

Not so the Archbishop who visited the church and expressed his astonishment at handling the wet statuette. Unfortunately for him the miracle was exposed. The statuette had been put in water at night and then into a deep freeze so that it could weep during the day.

One can only hope that the pope and his advisers will treat the evidence of tension between the government and Catholics more carefully than the Archbishop treated the miracle of Cuapa.

GRAHAM GREENE

At the Edge, Thank You

WITH worried looks, friends often ask how *Commonweal* is doing. The straight answer is: just splendidly — and, as usual, near the edge of doom.

The early Christians might have said the same — so perhaps something's on pitch.

The splendid part is that, once again, thanks to our fine columnists and writers, the Catholic Press Association last month awarded *Commonweal* four first prizes. Yes, we're going strong, thank you.

The edgy part is that our average annual deficit over the last two years has been \$45,000 — and rising. Without the good friends listed below, we'd be over the edge — and silent. To them and on behalf of all our writers and staff, our deepest thanks.

The fact is, though, that we make it, with the help of such friends, only by a whisker. We and they need allies. Do us all a favor and fill out the coupon on the back cover.

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